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A Memorial of Rev. I.W. Cochran.

J. W. Cochran

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A MEMORIAL

OF

REV. I. W. COCHRAN.

"A man greatly beloved."

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A Memorial of Rev. I. W. Cochran.

EARLY DAYS.

Israel Williams Cochran, although brought up in Brooklyn, was born at Foster's Meadow, Long Island, September 11, 1841, during the temporary sojourn of his parents at that place. His father was James B. Cochran, of Kirkcudbright, Scotland, who came to America as a lad. His mother was Catharine Baylis, of Brooklyn, lovely in person and character. She became the mother of seven children, four of whom lived to grow up. She died at the age of thirty-three. Williams had but faint recollections of his mother, being only eight years old at her death. He used to say to his children that he could not remember her face, but recalled her figure as she stood with her beautiful long brown hair falling almost to her knees. He often spoke of a Sabbath morning when she was not able to go to church and he stayed with her. She had him read aloud to her, and

told him that her favorite hymn was "Welcome, Sweet Day of Rest." She died very suddenly, leaving a helpless little family of five, the eldest, Mary, ten years old, and the youngest a babe of a week, who soon followed her. Their grandmother Baylis came to take care of the motherless little ones, but, finding herself too old and feeble for the task, gave it up in a year to two maiden sisters of their father, the Misses Isabella and Wilhelmina Cochran.

Mr. Cochran always tenderly and regretfully remembered his young mother. In a letter written nearly twenty years later, he speaks of the difference there might have been in his character "had I known, as I never have, a mother's love and a mother's care. These I have only known from the want of them, and the thought of that want, of how much better I might have been with them, makes my heart and throat full. But God knew best when He took away father and mother and sent me forth to fight the battle alone—not leaving me alone, but giving me His own strong arm to lean upon. Blessed be His name that He has not forgotten me! I have done everything I could to make Him leave me, refused His Spirit, forgotten His mercies, despised His love, rejected His grace, broken His covenant, wandered from His way,

provoked Him to wrath in ways that He alone can understand to the full, and yet, forever blessed be His holy name, I can rejoice, this morning, in the forgiveness of sin, and I, even I, the chief of sinners, can hope to-day for eternal life. How unsearchable is His goodness! How wonderful His patience! Yet, in spite of all this, the heart longs for human affection, forgetting, more than it ought, that that longing may be met in Christ."

The tenderness which his childish heart craved was abundantly bestowed by his father, who tried to be father and mother both to his bereaved little ones. He exercised the most watchful supervision over all their varied needs, their schools and lessons, their sports, and their religious education. He heard them recite their lessons every evening for the next day, saw them to bed, and tucked them in as a mother might have done, with many a tender word and kiss, and prayer. He never left the house in the evening till they were settled in bed, and then only to visit relatives. He gave up all other society for their sake. Though at this time not very well off pecuniarily, he hired French and German and music masters, and was very desirous for thorough education for them all. He often visited their schools and talked over plans

and methods with their teachers, being specially anxious that, while carefully instructed, they should not be unduly pressed. His own excellent education made him especially competent to direct that of his children. His son afterward passed on this same watchful supervision and exceeding tenderness to his own children.

Williams was prepared for college at the Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, where his successful scholarship is abundantly testified to by his school reports. He greatly enjoyed his school life, and thoroughly respected his principal, Dr. John H. Raymond, and used to like to tell how astonished he was when, long afterward, he called upon him at Vassar College, of which he became President, to find he was quite a small man. He had so looked up to him at school that he fancied he must be tall, and was quite unprepared to look down upon him from his own manhood's height, six feet one.

His parents were members of the Second Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, whose pastor during Mr. Cochran's childhood was Dr. I. S. Spencer, so well known as the author of *A Pastor's Sketches*. All his life he treasured a Bible with Dr. Spencer's autograph, given him for committing to memory the *Shorter Catechism*.

He was converted in the spring of 1857, under the preaching of Dr. Willis Lord, then pastor of the Second Church, afterward Professor of Theology in Chicago Seminary. Of this event he writes:

"My surrender of myself to Christ occurred as I was listening to a sermon from 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' As the minister spoke of the love of Christ in dying for our sins, I was moved to realize my sin in not loving the Saviour, and to pray for pardon then and there. Of course my pious training and the Christian privileges I had enjoyed had their effect in bringing me to this state, but I believe this was the turning-point. I afterward learned that Dr. Lord was particularly downcast after that sermon, and went home mourning over the unprofitableness of his ministry.

"Though I had decided the great question of my salvation, I kept the matter to myself for nearly a year, and did not unite with the Church until April, 1858, when I was received, with nearly thirty others—the fruit of the 'revival of 1857,' as it was called. There was no special interest in the church when the change came to me, however. The reverse, rather, was the case."

For several years he went to Brooklyn on the anniversary of his first communion, and ob-

served it in his old church there, with renewal of his first consecration. After his death his pastor, Dr. Lord, who soon after followed him to his reward, writes: "I wish I could express, at some fitting length, my impression of your now sainted brother as he was when a boy, and one of my flock in Brooklyn. I am, however, too feeble to write. I can only say that I thought him one of the finest boys I ever knew. His quality was golden, and that beneficent and beautiful life which he afterward lived was the proper unfolding of the clear and sure promise of his childhood. In his case the child was the father of the man."

The following is his own account of his call to the ministry: "From my earliest years I felt that I ought to be a minister. The conviction came to me, I think, through the consecration and the wish of my parents, and my knowledge of that wish. The idea seemed to form a part of my natural feeling and expectation in regard to the future, without ever coming to me with any special force."

The friends of his youth testify that he seemed born to be a minister, that his choice of any other profession would have seemed incongruous, while that of the ministry just fitted him. It was because, in the combined strength and

beauty of his character, he so resembled Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The "Let me serve" carved upon his monument may well be considered the motto of his life, adopted in its earliest years, and faithfully lived up to till its close.

He entered the New York University in the fall of 1858. He was an earnest and successful student, always maintaining the highest standing, both in scholarship and conduct. He was loved and respected, both by professors and students. His journals bear testimony to his anxiety for the conversion of his young friends, prayerfully naming those to whom he spoke about their souls, recording appointments made for conversation on religious topics, and occasionally making joyful mention of some one for whom he had been praying and working, who had been hopefully converted.

On the morning of April 28, 1859, his father read at family prayers the fifth chapter of II Corinthians, beginning, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That afternoon the father and son met in New York, and attended to some necessary errands. They parted, the son going home, and the father to

his country house at Sing Sing to make arrangements for the removal of the family there for the summer. They never met again in this life. Mr. Cochran, while walking over the grounds with his faithful and efficient gardener, felt suddenly ill, and ordered his carriage that he might be driven to the doctor's. When the carriage was ready, the maid knocked at the bedroom door to announce it. She got no response, so told the man to bring the doctor, as Mr. Cochran seemed to be asleep. When the physician came, Mr. Cochran was found lying dead upon the bed. The news was a terrible shock to his children, who loved and reverenced their father in an unusual degree. Doubtless the sore affliction had its effect in developing their characters, and making them more self-reliant than they otherwise would have been. Williams at once felt the responsibility of an eldest son, and endeavored to take a father's place to his brothers and sisters, but it seemed as if their earthly all had been taken; and for months—he testified in after life—he moved about as one in a dream.

Mr. James B. Cochran was very tender and lovable, all his friends bearing witness to his kindliness. To quote the words of his Sing Sing pastor, Dr. Phraner, at his funeral: "He

was just the man on whom a pastor could lean—sensible, cheerful, cordial, hopeful, ever ready to sympathize with and aid every good cause, efficiently but modestly doing his work without either giving or taking offense; ready, indeed, to occupy any place or to do any work if it was for Christ. The cause of his Master seemed equally dear to him, whether in city or country, and for this reason we always looked with much pleasure for his return among us, confident that the next Sabbath would find him in his accustomed place, both in the sanctuary and in the Sabbath-school. He lost no time in this transfer of his residence, hence notice was given to his class on last Lord's day that on the approaching Sabbath they might expect the beloved teacher with them again." For nearly forty years he labored in the Sunday-school as teacher or superintendent. The day before his death he was with his class in Brooklyn, instructing them in the Word of God.

He was of a most benevolent nature, always giving with a free hand. Indeed, his pastor testifies that he had often to stand between his generosity and the disposition of some to impose upon him more than his share, both as to contribution and labor. Faithfulness, unselfish-

ness, and generosity marked his character, as they afterward did that of his son.

He was very fond of singing, loving to have music in his home, and his son delighted to sing to his own children the hymns his father sang — "A Poor, Wayfaring Man of Grief," "Poor and Needy Though I Be," and "I Heard a Father Crying."

A few months after the death of Mr. James B. Cochran, his brother, Mr. Samuel Cochran, of New York, died, leaving his widow alone and childless. It was thought best for the two bereaved families to unite and make a home together, and in the fall of 1859 Mr. James Cochran's family, including the two aunts, went to live with Mrs. Jeannette S. Cochran, 34 West Twenty-first Street, New York. They became connected with the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Fourteenth Street, then under the pastoral care of Dr. McElroy. Mr. Cochran and his sister Mary at once took classes in the church Sunday-school, and also in the mission school for colored children, which was supported by the church. In the latter school especially, it being the most needy, he labored earnestly, and his journal bears record of his constant visitation of his scholars, and of his attendance at the sick and dying beds of several of them.

The superintendent of the colored school writes of this period: "I have few things in the retrospect of work in this school more pleasant to me than that of visiting among the scholars with Mr. Cochran. We did this a great deal together, on our Lord's plan of going in twos; and no more delightful companion in such work could well be imagined. He was also our chorister on the Sabbath, and in every way in his power sought to promote the welfare of the school."

Even at this early period, when he was but nineteen years old, an incident occurred that showed he had already begun to develop those qualities which made him so acceptable a visitant to those who were sick or in trouble.

A Christian gentleman in mature life, one who was not an especially intimate friend, was taken suddenly ill, and went down to death with but a few hours' warning. The day before he died he was told his condition, and asked if he would not see a minister; he replied, "I would rather have Will Cochran come and pray with me than any one else." The young man came to his side; they talked quietly and peacefully for a little while of the bright home that was awaiting the dying one in heaven, and of the Friend that was taking him there, and then Mr. Cochran knelt with the wife and

mother and commended him to the Saviour. This was the first of many whose paths into the dark valley were smoothed by his ministrations. After this he was often sent for by the dying, even before he entered into the active work of the ministry. He was a "son of consolation" by virtue of his own experience of sorrow, of his ready sympathy with the sorrowing, and of his unusual tact in saying just the word that was needed in every case. His strong faith, "as seeing Him who is invisible," enabled him to strengthen the trust of those who listened to his words. His gift in prayer was even then remarkable, enabling him to voice the needs of those whose supplications he led.

His family retained their Sing Sing residence as a summer retreat even after the Brooklyn home was broken up. The four young people greatly enjoyed it, as it preserved their independent life as a family, and their youthful spirits found free vent there after being held a good deal in check in their winter home in New York by the age and afflicted condition of their aunts. They had very lively times at Sing Sing, filling the large house all summer long with their young friends. There was constant hilarity, and many good-natured tricks were played off on each other.

He graduated at the New York University, June, 1862, with the valedictory honors, and entered Princeton Theological Seminary in September of that year. In both college and seminary he won the love and respect of his fellow-students in a marked degree. A distinguished classmate said of him while he was still in active work, "He was the holiest man in Princeton Seminary while he was there." Another classmate writes, "My life will never lose the impress made by his deep and true Christianity. He spoke a word of cordial invitation to me at college which I never forgot, and at Princeton, again, his presence was singularly helpful to me."

Another who was with him at school and college writes:

"He took a leading stand in class from the very first term until he received the appointment as Valedictorian. While a hard worker, he was no mere plodder, but a man of broad brain and earnest purpose. He was a universal favorite. He won the respect of his teachers not by fawning and flattery, but by honest work and irreproachable deportment. He never entered into any of the political scheming which always divides classes into cliques, but was the friend of everybody. He was a thoroughly honest friend, ready to withstand you to your face,

but his rebukes were always given without acrimony. We always understood that he was a high-toned Christian man.

"I remember a little argument we had one day about the use of 'ponies.' I thought it not amiss, and bought a *Bohn* for every *Tauchnitz*. He called me to account for it, and gave his experience, which I think was unique in our class, of a man who had *walked* every step of the weary way through the classics.

"I remember well his able exercises in college prayer-meetings, and in the Young Men's Christian Association, where he was always ready to confess his Master.

"I was never at his house, except when the class was so hospitably entertained at the Sing Sing mansion the week we graduated. That was a red-letter day in college life; we did enjoy it hugely. I have pictures of all its scenes hung up in memory.

"In conclusion, let me say that I never had a friend who, boy and man, has left on my heart such an impression of noble, exalted manhood. Courageous yet gentle, brave but not pugnacious, conscientious, studious, pious, he would have been a martyr had he lived in the days of the stake and the scaffold; as it was, he walked with God, and in his earthward conversation was a laborious, useful servant of the Crucified."

Still another, a seminary friend, writes:

"After the interval of twenty years since I saw him, my recollections are more of a general char-

acter than of particular impressions, more a sweet fragrance of precious memory that cannot be precisely defined or measured than anything that can be brought into formal expression in words. There was no one of the students in the seminary, among many noted men, who commanded to a higher degree the respect and esteem and, I may add, the admiration of all. Certainly I can say for myself that no other made so deep an impression upon me as he did, and the remembrance of what he was as a model Christian gentleman, a sincere and earnest man of God, has been to me an inspiration whose influence for good I have, as a minister of the gospel, often felt, and still feel. I recall one instance in particular in which he has been in my thoughts many times in all these years. The Sabbath afternoon conference in the oratory is an institution peculiar to Princeton Seminary, I believe. The professors, two or three of them, speak in turn to all the students on some previously announced topic. These meetings are very greatly esteemed by the students, and they are often peculiarly precious in their seasonable instructions and the spiritual privilege which they furnish. I think the topic at the time referred to was 'The Holy Spirit,' and the addresses were so tender, and the minds of all were so under the influence of the theme and the occasion, that it seemed at the close as if a word, even a prayer, from another voice would mar the delightful harmony and grate upon the feelings. Dr. Hodge called upon Mr. Cochran to offer the closing prayer,

and his first words of address to the Holy Spirit, 'O Thou Spirit of all grace,' just seemed to be the fitting expression of pent up feeling, while the prayer that followed completed the impression of the Spirit's nearness, of His abiding presence and power. I have never had a more decided conviction of its being the right man at the right time than when Cochran offered that prayer. He was a man among a thousand, and I have often thought of him as an illustration of those words. His very face was a benediction, and, as it seems to me, his life in any community would be a blessing to them, and a forcible preaching of the gospel, even if he had never entered the pulpit. He was a preacher of no mean intellectual force, but pre-eminently all who knew him would pronounce him a true man and a good man, and I know of no higher praise than that. Of a singularly lovely spirit, he was withal a thoroughly manly man. His piety was not only of that true and sterling stamp which admits of no question, but he was also endowed with good strong common sense and a well-balanced judgment, which made him a wise counselor, as I have personal reason to remember. His prominence among the students was due entirely to his force of character and personal worth. In many ways, and in many places, and to many hearts it is emphatically true that the charming and blessed influence of his beautiful life will long remain, and that he, being dead, yet speaketh."

On July 22, 1863, his only sister, Mary, mar-

ried the Rev. Thomas Carter, and went to live at Pluckamin, N. J. The house at Sing Sing was then sold, severing another tender tie. In the summer of 1864 Mr. Cochran and his two brothers, with some young friends, went to the Adirondacks to spend some weeks camping out, hunting and fishing. A week or two passed delightfully, when suddenly the youngest brother, Samuel, eighteen years of age, was taken with very severe hemorrhage of the lungs. They were at a distance from any physician, but removed him, as soon as he was able, to a hotel, where there was a doctor from Boston who made lung troubles a specialty. But they had to send ninety miles through the woods when a prescription had to be put up. Twenty years afterward a friend and classmate, visiting the Adirondacks, and seeing Mr. Cochran's familiar writing in a presentation inscription in a Bible in the hotel parlor, spoke of him to the hostess, and found that, though in the intervening years hundreds had come and gone, she retained a very definite remembrance of him, and was enthusiastic in his praises.

Though the lad lived nearly five years from this time, his life was a constant struggle with ill health. Mr. Cochran's love for this young brother was very tender. He regarded him as

"brother at once, and son," and the boy looked upon him as taking to some extent the father's place. He used to call him "Old Bill," with a very tender undertone beneath the boyishly familiar name. In the fall Mr. Cochran accompanied this brother to the West Indies, whither he had been ordered by his physician. In this journey they were accompanied by Mr. Frederick Hosford, an intimate friend, who had been with Mr. Cochran in school, college, and seminary, who was also in failing health, and who died the following year. This absence in the West Indies necessitated leaving the seminary for a year, and the interruption to his studies was a great trial to Mr. Cochran, but he was ever ready to sacrifice his own interests to the good of others, and the duty in this case seemed imperative. They spent the greater part of the winter in a resort among the hills of Jamaica, and then visited Cuba and the Barbadoes. He was too earnest a student not to spend much of his time over his books, but he greatly enjoyed the tropical scenery, fruits, and flowers. His own class in Princeton graduated before his return to the North, but the following fall he entered the next class, and graduated with it in 1866. On October 11, 1865, he was licensed to preach by the Second Pres-

bytery of New York, and in December of the same year he became engaged to Annie, only daughter of Mr. Robert Carter, publisher, of New York, whose eldest son, Thomas, had been married three years before to Mr. Cochran's only sister. This double connection was productive of the greatest happiness. He was received as a son and brother into the family, and the tie of adoption became in time as strong as that of blood. There was entire community of thought and feeling between him and his betrothed wife. The union only grew stronger and more tender with passing years, a union which death itself could not sever. There is nothing more beautiful in romance than his letters, both before and after marriage, letters in which his whole soul shone forth. In Mr. Carter's family a patriarchal fashion obtained for a quarter of a century, which was unique in its way. He had two sons and a son-in-law in the ministry, and during their vacations he took all his descendants to some pleasant summer resort among the hills or by the shore. Twenty of these annual summer holidays were spent among the Berkshire hills at Stockbridge and South Egremont, Mass. Sometimes the party was increased by intimate friends until it numbered nearly forty. All depended upon and clus-

tered around the aged couple, who found so much of their happiness in making the happiness of others. These were bright and sunny days to all, and will furnish happy memories to the young people till their locks are gray. None entered more heartily than Mr. Cochran into the spirit of these gatherings, both before and after his marriage, and he was always foremost in games and straw-rides, and merry-makings of all kinds. Sometimes the ministers would send off the clergyman of the village for his well-earned vacation, supplying his place in the pulpit and prayer-meeting, and always taking a large part in all the religious gatherings of the neighborhood.

Mr. Cochran graduated from the seminary in the spring of 1866, and in October of the following year went to Europe, accompanied by his aunt, Mrs. Samuel Cochran, and his youngest brother, both of whom were in delicate health. His trip was a source of immense pleasure and profit to him. His cultivated mind reveled in the scenes of ancient and modern history, and his religious nature was quickened by a further extension of the journey to Egypt and Palestine. The latter part of the journey was of especial value to him in his ministerial work. As he went he preached, not only in

frequent public services, but in words dropped by the way, to fellow-travelers, guides, sailors, sometimes in French, Italian, or German.

A few extracts from his letters and journals find appropriate place here. The first was written just after his landing from the *Scotia*, and gives his earliest impressions of a foreign land.

"Like many others, we found ourselves, on awaking in the harbor of Liverpool, in the friendly embraces of a fog. Cold and clammy, like a great snake's, were its folds, but we were more fortunate than many, for it soon released us, so that we could begin to see objects at a distance of a few yards, and finally it lifted entirely, and disclosed the white stone quays, the forest of masts, the piles of stone buildings, the puffing of ferry-boats, all, in fact, that can be seen in one of the largest ports in the world. On shore I was delighted with almost everything I saw. I expected to see a dingy, dirty-looking town, with narrow streets and heavy, gloomy-looking houses; and I was not prepared for the air of perfection and completeness which seems to surround everything here. The buildings look as if they were intended to last forever; some of the old ones almost as if they had lasted forever. The same thing may be said of the docks, and even the pavements of the streets. We left for London at 4 o'clock, and had just enough of daylight left to receive our first impressions of English scenery.

"Again I was astonished and delighted. To see the whole country like a garden—for fields and hedges were still green; to see every spot of ground cultivated; to dash through little villages with their quaint-looking old houses and their pretty, ivy-grown churches; to see attention paid to the architectural beauty of even the most common buildings—such as railway stations and engine-houses; to see the hardness and smoothness of the roads, and the regularity of the fields—all these things were new to me, and produced an impression such as I had never received from any other landscape."

He thus describes a service at Spurgeon's church:

"It is almost worth a trip across the Atlantic to attend a service at the Tabernacle. I do not say, to hear Spurgeon—for more wonderful far than the man, wonderful as he is, are the circumstances under which he preaches. We arrived at the door just at the right time. We were not aware of this, however, and our hearts sank within us when we saw the crowds on the steps reaching out to the sidewalk. We soon perceived that there was an onward movement, however, and learned that the doors had just been opened to the outsiders. Being on the outskirts of the crowd, we escaped a pressing. Gradually we made our way in at the side door. Two pairs of stairs confronted us. Wishing to take those to the lower gallery, we got upon those to the higher, and on entering the building were almost made dizzy by the height at

which we were standing. The building was already crowded; the aisles were full of people. We were fortunate enough to secure good seats opposite the preacher, and a place from which we could see almost every person in the house. But, opposite to the preacher, I could hardly see him, and gained no idea at all of his personal appearance. I was so far away, and the atmosphere of the building was so foggy, that I could hardly see him gesture. The building is in the form of an ellipse; Mr. Spurgeon stood near one end, and I at the opposite. But Mr. Spurgeon rose; there was a little bustle of arrangements for a few minutes, and then all that vast multitude was still. I shall never forget the impression made upon me as I looked upon them. Every available spot was occupied. There were no aisles, no seats, no steps, everywhere were people, people, people. I could not but think what a terrible commotion an alarm of fire would cause in such a place. But Mr. Spurgeon is beginning to read the hymn. I can hardly see him, but I can hear him; not one word, not one syllable is lost; all is clear, distinct, and natural. And then came the perfection of congregational singing. There was no organ, but I did not know it until afterwards. There was hardly any leading, but excellent time was kept. All arose, and all sang, and such a volume of sound and volume of praise I never before heard. It may have been worse music, but was certainly better worship than the singing at St. Paul's in the afternoon. The only thing to which I can compare it is the

singing of the ten thousand times ten thousand in the Apocalypse. After the singing Mr. Spurgeon prayed; and it was a beautiful prayer, simple, reverential, natural, earnest, and calm. It went right to the heart. Then he read part of a chapter, and commented on it, and then we sang again; then he gave out the text, Mal. iv. 2: 'But unto you that fear my name shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.' In his introduction he spoke of the different senses in which the coming of Christ was represented in the Bible. He then gave a somewhat extended explanation of the expression, 'Unto you that fear my name,' and then showed how Christ was, like the sun, the source of life and the source of growth. From this he passed to speak of and to young converts, of whom there have been a good many added to his church lately. His sermon was rather an expository and hortatory address than a sermon. His power, I think, lies in three things: First, and mainly, he preaches the gospel. Nothing but this could account for the masses of people flocking to hear him, for he does not excite the feelings: he reaches the heart through the intellect. The second source of his power is, doubtless, the way in which he presses the truth. There is nothing abstract about it, everything is simple and connected; he appeals often to experience; every truth is made practical. The third, and not the least, source of power is his perfect oratory. It is distinct; in the vast building each person, I think, could

hear every word. And then the emphasis was natural and the manner earnest.

"But whether I am correct or not in naming these as his sources of power, one thing is certain, that every Christian must rejoice that so many people can and do listen to the truth from the lips of one man. Who can limit the power for good of a man 'full of the Holy Ghost and of faith'?

"On inquiry, after the service, we were told that the building would seat five thousand. There are three thousand six hundred members, and the Communion is administered after service each Sabbath evening in the lecture-room to a certain number of communicants. All meet together once a year in the church for the same purpose. If every Christian could only exercise the influence which this man does, the world would soon be Christian."

Mr. Cochran spent some delightful months in France and Italy. Early in March, 1867, he started with two companions for Egypt and Palestine, stopping on the way in Sicily and Malta. From Catania he ascended Monte Rossi, an extinct crater of Mount Ætna. He writes:

"From its summit we had a fine view of Ætna on the one side, snow-capped, and, for a wonder, without a cloud; and on the other, the whole plain stretching down to the sea, from

acres of lava black and desolate to a broad green belt of vegetation in the distance. One of the most striking things in the landscape is the number of extinct craters to be seen. There are as many as eighty about the mountain. While I was at the top, I had quite a talk with my guide in Italian. I obtained from Rev. Mr. Buscarlet, in Naples, portions of the Scripture in Italian, and I have been giving them away as I found opportunity on my journey. I have seldom, however, ventured to add any words, my stock of Italian being small, but I found that I had enough to point these men to Christ, and to Christ alone. This has opened to me a way of doing more practical good as I go along. No one knows what fruit such poor little dry seeds, dropped by such unworthy hands, may bring forth. Sometimes I think that it is almost hypocritical in me to urge others to be good, and I cannot help thinking of the text, 'Lest having preached to others, I myself should prove a castaway.' Pray for me lest that should happen.

* * * * * *

"The moment we landed in Alexandria we were introduced into a new world. Everything is different—faces, dress, customs, building, scenery, and associations. The turbaned heads and loose and flowing garments of the men, the veiled faces of the women, are a never-failing source of interest and pleasure. I have had already many interesting illustrations of Bible customs, and, indeed, almost the whole book

seems new to me, and will, no doubt, appear more and more so as I go nearer the scenes of its principal events.

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"At length the hopes of many days have been realized: 'Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' My eyes have seen that city of which all Christians have read and thought so much, which is, for her past if not her present position, 'the joy of the whole earth.' I do not see how any one can help being disappointed by their first view of it. However much one may try to restrain his imagination, knowing that her glory is departed, that a curse is resting upon her, that she has been trodden under foot of the Gentiles—the vivid and inspired descriptions of the Psalmist styling it 'the perfection of beauty'—the imaginings of a lifetime, connected with the great events of which it has been the theatre, cause one to hope, in spite of one's self, that it is better than it has been represented. I must acknowledge that I was disappointed in my first view of the city. We came in sight of it yesterday afternoon about 4:30 P. M. We had been riding almost all day, having only rested for three-quarters of an hour. The road was exceedingly rough, leading through the ravines of the mountains of Judea, sometimes, apparently, over the dry beds of streams. The place was pointed out to me where I would get the first view of the city. Some domes appeared over the brow of the hill, a long white quadrangular building next came

in view, and while I was meditating whether that could possibly be the mosque of Omar, my guide informed me that it was the Greek convent. It was by far the most prominent object in the landscape, and seemed, from this point, to cover about as much ground as the city itself. This was very provoking—to see a thing of such small importance thrusting itself forward in such an impertinent way. The interior of the city did not disappoint me. I was prepared to find it like any other Eastern city, and I did find it so.

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"In the afternoon I went out alone to the Mount of Olives. My thoughts were subdued, but pleasant, as I walked up the hill. There is little doubt that the Saviour's feet trod many times the same road. My heart was full, and yet to walk in His footsteps is really to follow His example. I walked over the top of the hill until I could see Bethany, and had a fine view of the city and the surrounding country. I felt now more than satisfied of the truth of David's expression, 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north.' I had seen it before from the west, I now saw it from the northeast. In my walks during the day I went about once and a half around the walls of the city. Yesterday morning we spent in the valleys. We went down into the valley of the Son of Hinnom, on the south of the city, formed by Zion on the east and the hill of Evil Counsel on the west. In

the valley are the upper and lower pools of Gihon, now dry reservoirs, and on the side of the hill, among numerous tombs, is shown the Aceldama, or potter's field. It is a deep pit, where bodies have evidently been thrown, as scores can still be seen at the bottom. The tree is shown, too, on which Judas hanged himself. If this be the neighborhood where it occurred, the fact of his falling headlong may be explained, as there are many trees overhanging the precipitous sides. But this is not necessary, as the Greek has it, 'falling down, or flat.'

"They had communion yesterday morning in the English church, and I partook with them, the first time that I ever did so in the Episcopal form. The novelty of the form and the circumstances could not but make a deep impression upon me, partaking of the Supper where it was first instituted, hearing the words which were spoken over eighteen hundred years ago. After dinner I read over the gospels of Matthew and Mark, in order to fix in my mind the main events in the life of Christ. I have felt more the personal existence of Christ, as a man, since my stay here than at any other time in my life, except, perhaps, just after my conversion, and the different stages of my feelings have been somewhat similar to my experience then. Oh, pray for me, that I may experience a new conversion here—that the Holy Spirit here promised by the Saviour, and here descending first according to the promise, may come and dwell in my heart, and fill me with zeal and love for His service.

"I had a delightful walk to Bethany with Mr. Porter in the afternoon. The day was bright and beautiful, with loose clouds floating about the sky, and a cool breeze. It seemed like a September day at home. There are three roads to Bethany, two going right over Olivet, and one around its shoulder. Stanley thinks that the triumphal entry was by the latter, and gives very good reasons for his opinion. The fullest account is that of Luke xix. 38, and you will notice that there is a sort of division. In verse 37 it speaks of coming nigh, and in verse 41 of coming near. This suits the situation very well, as a small portion of the city is seen at a point farther off, and then it bursts on the view as one comes around the shoulder of the mountain. We knew, however, as we trod the stony road that the feet of the Saviour had often trodden it. We spoke of the first Christian Sabbath—the joy of the apostles over the resurrection. We thought of the two disciples who went that day to Emmaus, who were joined by a third person. We sat down on a stone to enjoy a view of the city. From this point it appeared covering a peninsula of mountain, cut off from those about it by the valley of the Cedron on one side and of Hinnom on the other. The path was full of loose stones, and the whole country was very rocky. How vivid seemed the words addressed to the Pharisees, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out.' The road winds around the Mount of Olives, and after crossing the valley by a sort of ridge, winds round a second hill.

"This was right over Bethany, and it may have been from it that Christ ascended, as the account says that he led his disciples out 'as far as to Bethany.' It may have been from it, too, that he cursed the fig-tree, and then how vivid become the words, 'Ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast into the sea.' A portion of the Dead Sea can be seen from here.

"The village of Bethany is on the side of the hill facing the east, and has a beautiful view of the mountains of Judea, of an arm of the Dead Sea, and of the mountains of Moab on the other side. We did not go to see the traditional cave of Lazarus, but, passing through the village to get rid of the importunities of the children who made a din with their cries of 'Backsheesh!' we sat down near the mouth of a cave, perhaps the one in which Lazarus was buried, and with that view before us—which had, no doubt, often refreshed the eyes of the Saviour when he returned to rest after teaching all day among a perverse and disbelieving people—we read that beautiful eleventh of John. Never before had it such meaning to us. The house was here, the sisters and brother had been here, the Jews came here to weep with Mary. Christ came here, the sisters met him near here, and it was within sound of my voice, as I read, that the very prayer I read, and the command 'Lazarus, come forth,' was uttered. It was to look again on that beautiful view that he came forth. Do you wonder that we were deeply impressed? What an argument for the truth of the gospel that a stranger from a land thousands of miles

off should bear witness to the truth of the words, 'I know that Thou hearest me always'! When we consider this, can we doubt that He will ask of God, and He will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession?

* * * * * *

"For five days I have been a dweller in tents. I had a little of the experience of those who, by contrast, were taught to seek a city having foundations. But our tents were certainly very different from theirs. At the close of each day's journey we formed our encampment of three tents. Hanna (Anglice, John), our waiter, welcomed us and offered lemonade. We entered the largest tent. It was circular, as they all are, supported by a pole in the middle, having a light iron bedstead on each of two sides, and a table standing close against the pole. This was already spread for dinner, which was soon brought in from the other large tent. Our fare was excellent, as good as in most of the Italian hotels. After dinner we read a little—but were almost too tired to do much—and then retired. The weather has been delightful, the mode of life agrees with me, and my appetite grows better every day. You would hardly know me if you should meet me as I ride along here, a white covering on my hat, a light umbrella over my head, a revolver buckled on outside of my coat. I have the only weapon in the party, but am glad that I brought it, as showing it does away entirely with the necessity for using it.

The American flag floats over the tent, so that the soil becomes in a sense our own land. We have prayers together every night, which is very pleasant, especially as our thoughts and feelings are generally quickened by the associations about us.

"We left Jerusalem last Tuesday morning, and, passing over the plains of Rephaim, south of the city, where David defeated the Philistines, stopping to look at the building which covers the tomb of Rachel (admitted by all to be such), we arrived about noon at the head of a valley where there are three great reservoirs, called Solomon's Pools. They once supplied the Holy City with water, and are thought to be the pools mentioned in Ecclesiastes. After resting a while, we took the road, still to the south—the road which Abraham took to Moriah to offer up Isaac, the road which David afterward took when he reigned in Hebron, the road which perhaps the Magi took on their return, and which the flying parents took to Egypt. When we were near Hebron we made a détour to the right, and were soon amid vineyards and olive groves, and came before long to the oak which is pointed out as the one under which Abraham sat. From here we turned into the valley of Eshcol, still wine-growing and fertile, and were soon at our tents opposite Hebron. There, on the hill-side over against us, was the cave of Machpelah, where still, perhaps, rests the embalmed body of Jacob, as it was brought from Egypt.

"The next morning, after a view from the

hill to the south, we entered the town. Here Abraham lived for a long time, sent out Hagar, received the angels. Here David reigned seven years, and perhaps over the very pool which we passed this morning he hung the murderers of Ishbosheth. Guided by some boys we got a look into the mosque area, and excited thereby the ire of the Moslems. We returned to the Pools of Solomon, passed along the beautiful Vale of Ethan, and soon came in view of Bethlehem on the hill-top. As we rode through the fields where shepherds watched their flocks on that eventful night, these words naturally came to mind, 'And suddenly there was with the angel,' etc. We visited the Church of the Nativity, and the grotto which may or may not have been the stable, before we went to our tents. In the evening we read the stories of Ruth and David, and were satisfied with the thought that, whether the particular locality is known or not, this is the place where the Saviour of mankind was born. The next day we visited what is called the Cave of Adullam. It is certainly well calculated for concealment and defense. We spent the night at Mar Saba. Here in a wild gorge in the wilderness is a Greek convent founded by a monk of the fourth century. From here, on Friday, we rode to the Dead Sea and encamped at Jericho.

I did not find the region of the Dead Sea so devoid of beauty as I had expected, though the scenery is peculiar. We bathed in the lake, and I found it almost impossible to keep my feet under the water in swimming. We

were not long out of the water before we felt as if we had been standing in a barrel of saltpetre, and were glad about an hour after to wash off the salt in the Jordan. This is a muddy, rapid stream, something like the Tiber, though not so wide. Mounds of rubbish mark the site of old Jericho, but a spring is still pointed out as the one which Elisha healed. Going up from Jericho over that lonely road which recalled so vividly the parable of the Good Samaritan, we passed Bethlehem about 4:30, and soon after were looking down on the Holy City from Olivet."

Mr. Cochran's journey through northern Palestine was most enjoyable. He saw the Samaritan passover on Mt. Gerizim, visited the cedars of Lebanon, and Baalbec, and had a delightful time with the missionaries at Beirut. Dr. Jessup accompanied the party on a portion of the tour, thus beginning a friendship which lasted through life. Mr. Cochran was at one time very anxious to join the Syrian mission, but was prevented by circumstances beyond his control. The Syrian field was always especially near his heart, and when he had a home of his own he enjoyed frequent visits from the Syrian missionaries. His interest in missions was always deep and heartfelt. He could not have been more faithful and devoted in a foreign field than he was at home, a workman needing not to be ashamed.

IN THE MINISTRY.

An extended tour through Greece, Germany, France, Switzerland and Great Britain came to an end in November, 1867. The following winter was spent in New York, and Mr. Cochran preached very regularly while awaiting a permanent settlement. One of his Sabbaths was of great interest to him as being spent in the home of ex-President Buchanan, in Lancaster, Pa., whom he described as being a most courtly and agreeable old gentleman. They sat late together each evening, and the ex-President gave his views at great length on matters of Church and state, politics and theology.

Mr. Cochran about this time received a number of calls, having three under consideration simultaneously, but decided to accept one to a church in Carmel, Putnam Co., New York. He was ordained and installed there on July 13, 1868, Rev. Dr. McElroy preaching the ordination sermon. He was married on Thursday, October 29, of the same year, by Doctors McElroy and Sutphen, then associate pastors

in the Scotch Presbyterian Church. Dr. McElroy remarked that he had never, in his long ministry, performed a ceremony where the prospects of happiness were brighter—promises most fully realized.

Light and shade were mingled on even this happy occasion, as Mr. Cochran parted upon his wedding day from his two brothers, one of whom he never saw again. A few days after the wedding his brother Thomas and his wife went to St. Paul, Minn., he having been advised to live in that climate on account of delicate lungs, while the younger brother, Samuel, still in search of health, sailed upon the same week for Europe, and died in Rome, Italy, the following March. These separations were keenly felt by Mr. Cochran, whose loving heart clung to relatives and friends to an unusual degree.

Mr. Cochran entered upon his ministerial life with all the ardor of his earnest, vigorous nature, an ardor which never abated as he grew older, but became more intense as years went by. He never spared himself, but was ready to spend and be spent for the Master. To all remonstrances about overwork he would reply that he never meant to rust out. He was through life exceedingly active physically. In

figure tall, slender, and agile, he was always more ready to spring over a fence than to go around to a gate. He excelled in manly exercises, and his graceful, erect bearing was so marked that a lady, a perfect stranger, exclaimed, on seeing him on the street, "There goes a gentleman!" He was always extremely courteous in word and deed, a thoroughly well-bred man, a Christian gentleman, because his Christianity was a power in his whole life.

Carmel, the scene of his first pastorate, was a beautiful place situated upon a lovely little lake surrounded by hills. The people were kindly and intelligent; the parsonage a bower of beauty nestling among the trees. One of these, a magnificent oak, was deservedly famous the country round. Dearly he loved the people, and dearly they loved him, and it was a great sorrow to both that the connection was severed after a pastorate of only eighteen months. While visiting at his sister's in Pluckamin, during his vacation in the fall of 1869, he was requested by the people of the First Church of Mendham, New Jersey, whose pulpit was then vacant, to administer communion to them on the first Sabbath of November. Mendham people have often said since, that when they heard his first prayer at the Preparatory Lecture on Saturday they

quickly concluded, "That is just the man we want." It was indicative of his spirituality that his prayers even more than his preaching drew people to him, but as a preacher he was always acceptable, both at home and abroad.

His great desire was to "feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer," and once when he was told that one of his elders had characterized him as a "teaching preacher," he remarked that no commendation could have been more acceptable to him.

He had refused to allow himself to be looked upon as a candidate for the Mendham pulpit, having no desire to leave Carmel, where he was very happy, useful, and beloved; but when a unanimous call came he felt that it must be considered prayerfully. He had reason to fear that the climate of Carmel was too severe for his health, and when he consulted the family physician in New York, Dr. James R. Wood, he told him that he should by all means accept the call. He said that there was some tendency to lung trouble, which might never be developed in a favorable climate, but that Carmel was unsuited for him, and that disease would be very likely to develop there, while Mendham had the best climate east of the Alleghanies for delicate lungs. This decided the matter, and Mr. Cochran

called his session together and presented his resignation. It was a sore trial to both parties.

Mr. Cochran entered upon his work at Mendham on Christmas Day, 1869, but was not installed until June 15, 1870. Rev. Dr. Fewsmith, of Newark, preached the installation sermon; Rev. Dr. Hastings, of New York, a former pastor, gave the charge to the people; Rev. Dr. Aikman, of Madison, the charge to the pastor; and Rev. Thomas Carter, the installing prayer.

Mendham is an historic church, mentioned in the lives of Whitefield, Brainerd, and Tennent under its Indian name Rocksiticus. Doctors Samuel Hanson Cox and Thomas Hastings were among the long line of honored pastors. In Revolutionary times its church building was used as a hospital, and among the many old graves of the hill-top cemetery are the tombstones of soldiers who fell in the War of the Revolution. In the neighborhood are vestiges of a camp occupied by a part of the army while Washington wintered in Morristown. In an ante-Revolutionary stone house of the village are still treasured some autograph letters of Washington, written during this winter. Washington Irving borrowed these letters when he was writing the life of his namesake, and returned them with a courteous letter of thanks

to the venerable owner, which she treasured as of almost equal value with the letters of Washington himself.

Now began a pastorate each year of which drew pastor and people together with a closer and tenderer tie. Mr. Cochran never had a divided vote in his session. His elders were men of strong character and intelligent views, who would sometimes come together with different opinions in regard to some course of action to be decided upon, but they always talked matters over in a kindly and Christian spirit until some decision was reached in which all could unite. Of the six elders who composed the session when Mr. Cochran came to it, only one remained at his death. The youngest in 1879 was the oldest in 1887. On two different occasions three new elders were ordained to take the places of those who had "gone over to the majority." They were all men of like spirit, in whom the pastor's heart could safely trust. There are no happier homes in our land than in country parsonages, no happier men than country pastors. Often as Mr. Cochran drove over the beautiful hills of Mendham he would say, "What a terrible wrench it would be to be parted from this dear people!" and after failing health compelled him to seek another climate

in the West, he often said: "We had to be pushed out of the nest. I never could have left it of my own accord." There was not a year of his ministerial life when he had not opportunity to take another charge, but he never seriously considered doing so. His love for Mendham was much like that of the old Jews for Jerusalem. He took great interest in his lawn and garden, and little farm of seven acres, enjoying his fruit and flowers, laughingly saying that if he ever broke down as a minister he would go at fruit farming. Often, as he drove in at the parsonage gate and looked admiringly at the smooth-shaven lawn and brilliant flower-beds, he would exclaim, "What a beautiful home we have!" He loved to gather his friends about him in his home, and one of his favorite texts was, "Use hospitality without grudging." Many entertain strangers from a sense of duty, feeling it a task, but to him it was a genuine pleasure, and even when tiresome and disagreeable people were received, he never would accept commiseration. He was constantly thinking of some one who needed a little rest and change, and inviting them for longer or shorter visits, and friends would laughingly give the parsonage the name of "The Sanitarium." When he went away for a vacation, he frequently invited some over-

tired worker, a broken-down teacher, or invalid missionary to accompany him on a little trip to the mountains or the sea. To him a pleasure shared was more than doubled.

During his first year in Mendham he greatly enjoyed the neighborhood of his dear and only sister, Mary, the wife of Rev. Thomas Carter, of Pluckamin, twelve miles away. The brother and sister were very much alike in many characteristics, notably in their unselfishness and hospitality. All was cheer and happiness in her home, she was so bright and energetic, so ready to sacrifice herself for others' happiness. She used to gather a large circle under her roof, and endeavor to make them have a good time, and with marked success. The double connection between the two brothers-in-law, the entire congeniality of tastes between them and their wives, and the unity of all their interests, made it seem more like a union of four than a union of two distinct couples. Frequent visits were interchanged between the two families, and they were looking forward to long years of happiness together, when suddenly one evening a message came to the Mendham parsonage that Mrs. Carter was dying. Mr. Cochran and his wife started at once to drive through the pitchy darkness, hoping to be in time to see the dear

one, dreading what they might find when they reached her home. Once Mr. Cochran spoke, referring to the subject of his prayer-meeting address the night before: "My cry came before Him, even into His ears." He had said then that God could interpret even our inarticulate cries when our hearts were too full for utterance. Now he said, "We can do nothing but cry now." As they crossed the bridge by the mill, near her home, he said: "How often have we walked here together! How full everything seems of her presence!" When they reached the house a neighbor came out and destroyed all hope by the announcement, "She is dead!"

Those were days of overwhelming sorrow. To the husband and four helpless little ones the loss was unspeakable. The people of her husband's charge loved her dearly, and had been accustomed to follow her cheerful, energetic leadership with perfect love and trust. On the day after her death her brother was standing, with a friend, by his side, when the undertaker came in to perform some duty, and they stepped aside. Presently Mr. Cochran whispered, "That is a sight seldom seen—an undertaker turning away from a coffin to weep." Her work in that humble little village will not soon be forgotten.

The brother ministers who took charge of the funeral were warm and loving friends, and spoke from the heart and most impressively to the crowded and weeping assembly in the church. One of them alluded to her graceful hospitality, and said that, as he had looked upon her as she lay so beautiful in death, with her lovely smile upon her lips, he had thought that she had welcomed her Saviour with the same sweet smile with which she had always welcomed her friends. Another quoted the words: "Jesus said unto her, Mary! She turned herself and said unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

It is hard even to begin to speak of Mr. Cochran's labors for his church, they were so varied and incessant. People have frequently remarked that they did not believe that there was a man or woman in the township to whom he had not spoken about their souls. Even Roman Catholics felt he was a true friend to them, and many of them have shown their affection for him. A year after his death the priest of the village sent a large bunch of very beautiful roses to Mrs. Cochran, who was stopping in the neighborhood, with the message that he had noticed that she liked to lay flowers on her husband's grave, and he would like to have these

laid there. A little Catholic girl says that Mr. Cochran took her into his buggy one day, on her way home from school, and talked to her about studying, and developing into a noble, God-fearing woman. She said, "Nobody ever talked to me so before." He always visited the entire congregation every year, praying in every house, and when there was sickness or sorrow, he was a frequent visitor. He was most tender and sympathetic. He had known much sorrow himself, and he knew how to comfort those in affliction, always seeming to know just what to say to them. An old lady in his congregation relates that once, when she was in sore trouble, she said to him: "O Mr. Cochran, I wanted to see you so much, and thought you had forgotten me. I was beginning to feel hardly toward you." "Whenever you feel hardly toward me just get down on your knees and pray for me." She said it was just what she needed, and she often had thought of it since when tempted to judge others harshly. A ministerial brother says that there was nothing he envied Mr. Cochran so much as the power of giving rebuke. He never shrank from duty in this respect, his wounds were faithful, but he rarely gave offense by the plainest speech. It was so evident that he spoke from love and for the good of the cul-

prits that they were ready to feel, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness." He did not hesitate to reach down to the most depraved and vicious, and his native dignity always protected him from insult.

He had a remarkable gift in prayer, often expressing people's needs better than they could themselves. At family prayers he seemed never to forget anyone—even the servants, who could not be present on account of their creed. His constant prayer for them was probably one reason that he was blessed with such faithful and affectionate service.

He always remembered tenderly "the mother with her burdens and cares," and after the birth of each child, gave thanks in the church "for a valuable life that had been spared." Many of the congregation felt that they owed the lives of friends to his fervent prayers for them in church. He often spoke of one night when his wife was at the very gates of death, and he went down to the study after the most immediate danger was passed, and prayed with an earnestness for her life which he had never felt in any petition before or afterward. He thought her life was given to him in answer to that prayer. Surely no life was ever prayed for more fervently and continually than his was, and yet

it was taken. Truly, God's ways are not as our ways.

He took a great interest in the Sunday school, always visiting it for the opening exercises, making great use of the blackboard, and encouraging the children to learn verses by the offer of reward books. At Christmas festivals he always got up the programmes himself, and made them novel and interesting, while at the same time some useful and spiritual lesson was taught. The very last Christmas festival of his pastorate gathered in a social way in the parsonage parlors. It was in the interest of the Indian school at Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the children brought offerings for that object. Four young men were dressed as Indians, and made speeches which had been originally spoken by some Indian chiefs who had visited the Albuquerque school. The offerings were taken up by two young ladies prettily dressed as Indian maidens. Somebody said that they ought to be named, and Mr. Cochran quickly said, "Call them Wild Rose and Bright Eyes." He took a warm interest in the young, and his winning ways drew them to him. One of the first in Mendham whom he was privileged to welcome into full communion with the church was a boy nine

years old. On the day that Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relations between the Mendham church and Mr. Cochran, it ordained that boy as a missionary.

From his Cæsarea home that same boy sent these words of sympathy to Mr. Cochran's wife after his death: "I can only try to tell you how I love Mr. Cochran, and what hard work it was for May and me to get through yesterday's letters that told us all about it, how you did reach the New York home, and how he went quietly from there to the better home, the home that is never broken up. I wrote home that I felt as if I had lost another father, and one, indeed, whom I knew better than my own father, and of whom I shall have more memories. How much he has done for me, from the time when I joined the church in Mendham, a month after he came there, through all these years, I can never tell. I remember the very spot in the study where we sat when he talked with me about uniting with the church, and where he kneeled down to pray with me. May all the blessings that I have received through him come back on you and on his children for his dear sake!"

Those about him learned to lean upon his judgment, which seldom erred. Though very

prudent in avoiding offense, he never shirked responsibility when he felt it to be a duty. He would laughingly say, "My shoulders are broad," and go on to do what he thought right, let who would blame. He frequently felt it a duty to preach on topics of the day, as he thought that the pulpit should instruct in matters of public morality, but he always did it in a non-partisan spirit. A hearer who did not know to which political party he belonged would never have found out from his preaching, for he preached on these questions from a higher standpoint than that of politics, and did not hesitate to expose the false positions of either party. As an illustration of his ready judgment we relate the following incident: When Garfield was elected to the Presidency, a committee waited upon him to ask if he would not illuminate his house on a certain evening. He at once replied, "No, this house belongs to the congregation, Democrats and Republicans alike. I cannot use it for any party purpose." But when Garfield died the parsonage was the first house in the village to be draped in mourning. There was then no question of party; it was a tribute due to the honored President of the United States.

His tender sympathy and wise counsel, and

his gentle voice and manner, made him a very acceptable visitant at the bedside of the sick. He was a born nurse, and would smooth and arrange pillows, and make suggestions as to ventilation and rearrangement of the sick-room which were often of great advantage to the sufferers. He gave much thought to his funeral services, for he considered that there were often people who went to funerals who rarely attended church, and he tried to drop a word that would reach their hearts. He remembered, too, that the mourning friends were in a condition to be easily reached by the blessed truths of religion. When the weather was favorable he often had brief, varied, and beautiful exercises about the open grave, quoting a short, appropriate text, and frequently ending with the benediction, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

He attended the funeral of two of his elders in one week. They had been born the same year, had lived on adjoining farms, had gone to

school together, had united with the church the same Sabbath, and were ordained to the eldership the same day. Each had lived seventy-six years on the spot where he was born, and died in the same week. The funeral of one was upon a perfect spring day, and after laying the venerable form in the dust Mr. Cochran repeated the lines :

"E'en down to old age all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

"The soul that to Jesus has fled for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Mr. Cochran believed in paying every respect to the dead. He thought it was one way in which "the living shall lay it to heart." At the same time he disapproved any extravagant display of the trappings of mourning.

His tenderness to those in trouble was very marked. Having known sorrow himself, he knew how to sympathize with others; but not all those who have had trials have—

"a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize."

After his death several people to whom he had written letters in times of sorrow sent them to his wife, saying that they could find no words more comforting than his own, and adding the request that they be returned. The following is one which might well have been written of himself:

MENDHAM, Ap. 2, 1878.

MY DEAR MRS. ——:

I cannot forbear expressing my sympathy with you in the sad affliction which has recently fallen upon you.

It seems impossible to realize that we shall not meet your husband if we are permitted to be with you again this summer. He was so young, so bright, so active, so cheerful, so full of life, so earnest, that it seems contradictory to think of him as still in death.

But we need not, and we must not, think of him thus. God had better work for him—a higher life, better enjoyments, and fuller opportunities; as the "place" was prepared, and he was prepared for it, so Jesus came to receive him unto Himself.

But we feel that the place which he filled here is empty — the place of son, brother, friend, Christian worker, Sunday-school superintendent, father, husband. There is only one that can fill the void in the heart and in the world. "Thy Maker is thy husband," more loving, strong, and full of tender sympathy than any human friend can be. "We have not an High

Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities." Then your husband is yours still. Have you seen those touching lines of Mrs. Browning's on a child's death, called "Only a Curl"? Part of them are just as appropriate of your loss:

"God lent him, and takes him, you sigh;
Nay, there let me break with your pain;
God's generous in giving, say I,
And the gift that He gives I deny
That He ever can take back again.

"God lends not, but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'Tis to add to it rather—amend,
And finish it up to your dream."

These are comforting thoughts, and there are many others, but the pain is there at the heart, and the eye must weep, and Jesus weeps with you. I appreciate your loss, for I felt very much drawn out to your husband.

Please express deep sympathy to his parents and brother, and receive it for yourself from both Mrs. Cochran and

Yours sincerely,

I. W. COCHRAN.

A week after his death there was found among his papers a letter to his family, giving them wisest and most tender comfort and counsel.

But it was in his own household that his no-

ble and winning qualities were most plainly shown forth. It has been said that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre," but those who knew him best loved him most. Of a faithful man who lived with him thirteen years, and soon followed his beloved master to the grave, it was remarked, "John worships Mr. Cochran just as he worships the Virgin Mary." Another domestic said of him, "He would take the very coat from his back to give it to a poor man." Another, who lived with him for seventeen years, and still continues with his family, showed an attachment and devotion seldom equaled.

As a husband he was ever tender and true, never failing to his wife in all the consideration and courtesy of a lover. His words of congratulation to a newly married pair were, almost invariably, "May your wedded life be as happy as mine has been—I can ask no more." To his children he was a most loving father, entering heartily into their studies and their sports, making them, as far as possible, his companions. They owed much to him for his instructions, both in their secular lessons and in connection with their Sunday-school work. He used to go over the Sunday-school lesson with them on Saturday morning, giving them the benefit of his thorough preparation of it for the Thursday

evening meeting. Then at family prayers he always had some interesting and pleasant instructions. Before morning prayers he would say, in his cheery way, "Class, take your places," and then the children would stand in a row and recite whatever he happened to be drilling them on. At one time it would be the *Child's Scripture Catechism;* at another, the Golden Texts of the quarter. Even the babies, too little to speak, thought it great fun to toddle into the line and stand with their toes on a particular seam of the carpet. A great many Bible verses were committed in this way. At prayers he always held one and the mother another of the younger ones on the knee. The children were encouraged to ask questions, and the exercises were made as informal as possible. Evening prayers especially were constantly varied. They seldom read the Bible, but would repeat some passage of Scripture in concert, or a subject would be chosen, and each one would recite a verse upon it, or the Golden Texts for Sunday-school would be gone over. Even the little six-year-olds could recite the Golden Texts for a year. He had a regular little liturgy for Sunday mornings, with a change on Communion Sundays from the Ten Commandments to the Fifty-third of Isaiah. On Sunday evenings a part

of the Fourteenth of John was recited in concert, and then each member of the family in turn offered a prayer. There was always singing—papa leading, and one of the older children playing the accompaniment on the piano. A thoroughly trained musician, who visited him in the last months of the dear home, said to Mr. Cochran, "I don't believe that you know that you have a real talent for leading the children's music." He laughingly disclaimed the praise, and said that he was not aware of any particular gift in that direction. He certainly had a great gift for making such things enjoyable. The same friend wrote Mr. Cochran after he went to Minnesota, that he had never known anything so mysterious as the breaking up of that happy home.*

Mr. Cochran was always very merry and playful with his children. On rainy days he would exercise himself and them with games, sometimes the old-fashioned ones of "hide and seek" or "I spy," or, again, with some game of his own invention, or he would lead them in calisthenics, at which he was an adept, or they would have a menagerie, each member of the

* After his death a friend wrote: "He made home heaven-like by his presence in it, and now heaven seems homelike because he is there."

family being disguised as a different animal. The children always pleaded for birthday parties, of which he was the life. On Christmas he insisted on a tree, and had parsonage and Sunday-school trimmed with greens. When the parents went away from home, just before their return the children would dress the house with flowers and foliage, and put "Welcome Home" in floral letters over the door.

The birthdays of each member of the family, and all his wedding anniversaries, were always remembered with some well-chosen gift, and very often by commemorative verses, which were more valued than the gifts. His letters to the children were always greatly treasured. They were often written in verse or illustrated by drawings. For very little ones they were often carefully printed, that they might read them themselves.

The spiritual training of his children was very near his heart. It was with great joy that he admitted his oldest son to church membership when he was not quite nine years old. In December, 1884, on the same day with the ordination of three elders, his oldest daughter, eleven years old, united with the Church. The ordination had been very solemn, and when he addressed his little daughter, who was the only

candidate for church membership, he came down from the pulpit and stood just before her. In administering the vows, he said, "Do you, my dear daughter," etc., making it very tender and personal. The child remarked afterward, "Wasn't it good in papa to say 'My dear daughter'?" His third child desired admission to the communion the first winter in St. Paul, but his father said, "If you wait till spring perhaps I may be able to admit you myself, and I should like to do it." The little fellow did not, therefore, become a member of the church till after his father's death, when his pastor very touchingly alluded to the witnesses, seen and unseen, of his act of consecration.

Living a life of close communion with God, he was peculiarly happy in his remarks at sacramental feasts. A letter written after he had entered into rest, by one who frequently heard him, says: "I regret most deeply that I did not write, as I intended, and thank Mr. Cochran for the spiritual help he had given me. To know him and to understand him, in a measure, was to gain in spiritual life. I never met him without a new impulse upward, but I gained definite spiritual progress from the influence of some of his sermons. One at a communion service in Mendham was the beginning of a

new period in my spiritual life. Some day I may be permitted to thank him, but perhaps the acknowledgment would have cheered some hour of languor or suffering had I sent it as I intended."

His private religious character was chiefly marked by his study of the Bible and prayer. He spent much time daily over his devotions, reading the Hebrew as well as the English in the morning, and the Greek as well as the English at night. During the time he was in St. Paul he read the Bible more than all other books put together. It was the feeling of those who knew him best that he was a man who was very intimate with God.

Mr. Cochran's labors were far from being limited by the bounds of his own congregation. He bore an active part in Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, as well as in Bible Society, temperance, and Sunday-school work. He was in labors most abundant. For many years he was chairman of the Presbyterial Committee on Systematic Benevolence, and later of the Synodical Committee. In 1879 Dr. Jessup, Moderator of the General Assembly, appointed him chairman of the Assembly's committee on that subject, so that he was at one time chairman of the Systematic Benefi-

cence Committee of Presbytery and Synod and General Assembly. He did an enormous amount of work on these committees, preparing reports and statistical tables, and conducting a large correspondence on the subject. People interested in these matters wrote to him from all parts of the world. He was often greatly hampered in his work because the brethren did not send in their reports to him in time, so that he would often have to sit up almost all night at meetings of the Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly, to do work that could not be done before because he had not the necessary data. His reports have won great praise from leading men in the Church, but he never worked for praise. He was willing that others should bear the credit if only the work was done. He wrote a great deal for the religious press on this topic. His communications were generally published as editorials, so that they cannot now be traced. He preferred this arrangement, because he thought their position as editorials brought them more authoritatively before the public, and what he wanted was accomplished work and not credit. Certainly he never sought his own. God knows how earnestly and with what a single heart he labored in this cause. "The Master praises—what are men?"

After remaining chairman of the Assembly's committee for two years he declined reappointment to the chairmanship, feeling that the work was too much for his strength, but he continued a member of the committee until his death. For years he went to every Assembly, never failing until the last May, when his hemorrhages came just before the meeting.

The duty of systematic giving was constantly brought before the congregation. He instructed them in the needs of the Church and the world, and the duties of individuals in view of them. He always had a prayer of consecration before the taking of a collection, and prayed earnestly for the cause for which contributions were asked. He felt that few Christians knew how little they gave, and urged the keeping of a regular account as the only way in which they could be sure that they were giving systematically and proportionally.

Many members of his congregation adopted his views, and felt that they were helped in their Christian development by it. One lady writes: "Tell Mr. Cochran he taught me to have faith enough to tithe all the money I receive, so that I almost always have something to give. My cause of stumbling was debt. I said, 'What right have I to give when I am in

debt?' So I prayed that I might be able to get out of debt and keep out; then, I thought, I will be free to give. That state of things lasted for years. Finally I said, I will give one-tenth to the Lord, any way, and continue to pray and work to pay my debts. The result is that I can give a great deal more, and am freer from harassing debts than ever before. I learned this lesson of faith from Mr. Cochran."

From the experience of another member of his congregation Mr. Cochran wrote a tract entitled, *Tithing a Peach Orchard*, which was reprinted many times in various forms.

His own practice was to devote one-fifth of his income to benevolence. One of his congregation writes: "His liberality was not the result of large means, as many supposed. It grew out of a heart thoroughly consecrated to the Master and His work, and carried into practical operation by thorough and systematic business habits. Mr. Cochran practiced the strictest economy in little things, not that he might add to his wealth, but, as he expressed it, that he might save money for the Lord. It was a common saying of his, 'We must give till we feel it.' On one occasion the writer remembers congratulating him, on his return from New York, on having a new hat. Mr. Cochran

said, 'No, you are mistaken; this is the old one with a new band and binding, which cost sixty cents. I have saved four dollars and fifty cents for the Lord, which I have already paid into the treasury.' A trifling incident in itself, but it shows how this self-sacrificing man of God took thought in order that he might give."

His private benevolence account-book was very carefully kept. One page was headed, "Laid by in Store." On this he noted down one-fifth of his income as it came in. The opposite was headed, "Paid into the Treasury." On this an account was kept of all his contributions to benevolence.

He carefully trained the young people under his charge in regard to benevolence. The following verses were written by him for a Christmas entertainment of the Sunday-school, at which each child brought an offering for a home for poor children.

FIRST FRUITS FOR GOD.

First fruits for God—of corn and vine,
Of tree or bush, of sheep or kine,
Of all that men call mine and thine,
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—of daily toil,
That hands have gathered from the soil,

Or brains have wrought by midnight oil,
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—from stores and trade,
From ships and railroads lending aid,
From all that factories have made,
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—from all our ways,
The first day, Sabbath, for his praise,
The morn of life and morn of days,
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—for this New Year
We'll give Him all we hold most dear,
We'll try to spend it in His fear—
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—He gives us all
The sun to shine, the rain to fall;
He safely guides this rolling ball—
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—He loved us first,
He gave the best unto the worst,
His only Son for man accurst,
The first and best for God.

First fruits for God—He is the first
To Father, Son, and Spirit burst
Praise from the whole great universe—
The first and best for God.

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

THE great mistake of Mr. Cochran's life was in living at constant high pressure in regard to work, burning his candle of life at both ends. Early in December of 1884 he took a heavy cold, which led to his final breaking down in health. He did not give up to this cold, but went through even a larger amount of work that winter than usual. There were revival services in a part of his parish called Brookside, and he went there night after night in the bitterest weather. Many feel that they owe their salvation to his labors that winter. It was at the price of his life, and assuredly he would gladly have laid it down for the sake of one soul. In the midst of all this work he was invited to go to Princeton Seminary to preach to the students on "Systematic Benevolence." The members of the Philadelphian Society of Princeton College heard he was coming, and sent him a letter, signed with all their names, asking him to address them on Saturday evening, which he did. He urged the young men to open an account-book with the Lord, and to give him his por-

tion. Some of them came up afterward, and promised to do so.

He preached in the Seminary chapel on Sunday morning, January 11, 1885, on I Corinthians xvi. 2, a sermon in which he endeavored to put the thought of years upon the subject of giving. The professors expressed themselves gratified at his presentation of the truth, and Dr. Paxton asked him to come again and speak to his class on systematic giving and the benevolent work of the Presbyterian Church; and he accordingly went there in February for that purpose. In March he delivered the same address at Union Seminary before the Students' Missionary Society.

While at a meeting of the Presbytery in April he had a slight hemorrhage. On Sunday, May 3, he had another in church at evening service, but went to New York the next morning, as he had already planned. The children, as usual, crowded to the window to see him off, and on looking at their bright and loving faces he thought, "I wonder if I shall ever see them all again!" On going to the city he made an appointment to see a specialist the next day about his lungs, but that very night was taken with a severe hemorrhage, and on the following Wednesday he had another. This sudden illness

was a terrible shock to his large circle of loving friends. He had seemed so full of life and activity that it came upon them like a thunderbolt. To his family it is very strange to remember how everything went on as bright as ever until the sudden blow came which shattered hope and joy. How their lives were bound up in that one precious life!

His friends rallied round him with every kindness, doing everything they could to help him bear the heavy burden, showing their love and sorrow with the utmost tenderness. He writes: "When the hemorrhages came, it seemed to me as if I were very near the dark valley. I did not fear the result for myself, but I was troubled at the thought of leaving my wife and children. But the Lord, during all my sickness, has shown Himself to me, and enabled me to maintain a cheerful spirit, and leave all things in His hands. How can I praise Him enough for all His wonderful kindness, for the manner in which He has moved others to show their love towards me! For all the way He has led me."

The best medical skill was at once called in. Entire rest for a year was prescribed, and the physicians ordered him to go to St. Paul, Minn., where his brother had gone years before, and

where he still lived. Mr. Cochran at once offered his resignation to his congregation, but they refused to accept it, hoping that in another year he would be able to return to them. It was decided to engage the Rev. James Carter as a supply for the present, and he very acceptably filled the position. His people then, and always, showed the utmost love and consideration for their pastor.

An incident of his stay in New York, on which Mr. Cochran loved to dwell, was a call from the Rev. Dr. John Hall. He characterized it as a model pastoral visit. The Doctor's bearing was most kindly and sympathetic. He addressed the sick man rather as a fellow-Christian than as a minister. Among other things, he said that he had often told the sick that we were apt to fancy that the Christian graces could best be shown forth in active life. "But," said he, "the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—may be shown on a sick-bed just as well as anywhere else." This thought often comforted the dear invalid, and certainly no one could show forth these graces more plainly than he did.

The same kind friend admirably described Mr. Cochran's character, after his death, when

he said: "I have never known such universal expressions of love and respect of any man as of him. It was not because he sought popularity; he never thought of it. It was because he forgot himself, and thought only of others, and everyone felt that he was a friend."

At this time Mr. Cochran wrote the following verses, suggested by the Queen's offer of a peerage to Mr. Gladstone.

PREFERRING SERVICE TO HONOR.

I thank thee, gracious sovereign,
For the offer thou dost make,
To set me among nobles,
And the burden from me take:
But let me serve!

I am often very weary,
And both flesh and spirit fail;
The way seems sometimes dreary,
And with joy the end I'll hail:
But let me serve!

There's so much work remaining,
So many souls are lost,
And sin needs such restraining,
And triumphs at such cost:
O let me serve!

The idlers are so many;
The workers are so few—
In some fields are not any
Who yet can dare or do:
O let me serve!

The prospect is so pleasant,
The harvest is so white,
Success e'en now is present,
And work is such delight:
O let me serve!

The work is not yet finished
Which I had hoped to do;
My zeal is not diminished,
My heart is firm and true:
O let me serve!

I want to lift the lowly;
I want to help the weak;
I want to make men holy,
Glad news of peace to speak:
O let me serve!

I want to make men brothers;
To teach the rich and poor
To seek the good of others,
And aid them from their store:
O let me serve!

Dear Lord, thou ne'er hast left me
To work and serve alone;
Nor of Thy grace bereft me,
But more and more hast shown:
O let me serve!

What offering can I tender
For what Thou gav'st to me?
What service can I render
That's worthy, Lord, of Thee?
But let me serve!

And when Thy hand has raised me
Unto Thy heavenly throne,
I'll say, when I have praised Thee
For the "Well done" and crown:
Still let me serve!

After spending seven weeks in the city Mr. Cochran recovered his strength sufficiently to return to Mendham. The friends there had done everything for his comfort. An invalid-chair had been placed in a large covered carriage, with plenty of pillows and shawls, so that he made the journey very easily from the railway station to his house. People stood at their doors and waved their greetings as he drove past. The house was trimmed with flowers and mottoes, and many delicacies had been sent in. Friends were exceedingly thoughtful about tiring him with calls, much as they desired to see him. He improved rapidly, and seemed very happy, except for the sad thought of leaving so many loved ones. In the last weeks of his life he expressed the conviction that it would have been better for him if he had never left his home. He drove out every day and walked out occasionally, and would have gained even faster but for the fatiguing preparations for leaving home. He interested himself as much as ever about the farm and garden, and never

seemed to admit the possibility of making a permanent home elsewhere. The dear Mendham people did everything in their power to help him and contribute to his comfort.

The Sunday before he left Mendham, he went into Sunday-school, but the voice that had so often pleaded tenderly with the scholars could no longer address them. He went to the blackboard, of which he had made such constant and appropriate use, and wrote his farewell message. "I want everyone in this Sunday-school to be a Christian before I come back—no, before I go away. Your loving Pastor." That message still remains upon the board, being lovingly and carefully preserved. At Christmas time afterwards it was wreathed in evergreens, and at his funeral it was brought up to the church draped in deep mourning.

He had not been in church for nearly three months, but this last Sunday he ventured to go. At the close of the service, to the surprise and alarm of his friends, who feared the result of such an exertion, he arose and went forward to the platform in front of the pulpit and said a few words of farewell to his beloved and most loving people. He never entered his church again till "devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." The

last words he spoke to his people were the priestly benediction, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

On Thursday afternoon, July 24, he walked down the hill from the church to the parsonage, and as he looked at the lovely prospect which had so often delighted his eyes, the home of so many years and the scene of almost his whole ministry lying full in view, he remarked, "I shall never see anything so beautiful until I see it again." He was wonderfully sustained through all these trying times, as to outward composure, but his heart was sorely wrung.

On Tuesday, July 28, he started with his family to St. Paul. It was a very trying journey for him. The heat, fatigue, and discomfort were too much for his strength, and it was many weeks before he recovered from it; indeed, he was not as well as when he left Mendham until cold weather came.

A pleasant house in a fine location in St. Paul was secured for the family for the second week in September, and the Doctor urged that the interval should be spent in some country place instead of being in the city in the hot weather.

It was more than two weeks before a suitable place could be found, and this time was a very trying one to Mr. Cochran, suffering much from the debilitating heat, and several members of the family being severely sick, but at length a haven of rest was found at Wyoming, Minn., a very quiet little place about thirty miles from St. Paul. The place was very homelike and pleasant, a regular Pennsylvania farm-house set down in the prairies of the West. The rooms were sunny and pleasant, the table was excellent, and the treatment he received exceedingly kind.

There was a little M. E. church in the place, but it had service only every other Sunday, and they only had Sunday-school on the days when they had Church. This did not suit Mr. Cochran, and, feeble as he was, he visited the principal people and persuaded them to have Sunday-school every week. When he visited the place a year later they had almost completed a neat little church, and the Mendam people sent them a communion service and Sunday-school library.

The fall was a very damp and rainy one, which was of course bad for his health. There was much severe sickness in the family, and many things that were trying in his surround-

ings, and Mr. Cochran seemed more depressed than at any time during his decline, but, even then, his calm and courage and cheerfulness were remarkable. He stayed himself upon his God at all times. It seemed sad that he who had led an unusually bright and happy life for many years should have had so many dark and trying days at its close. Yet his courage, faith, and patience shone the brighter for the ordeal. He greatly missed the atmosphere of affection that had hitherto wrapped him round, and felt that his infirm health precluded his making friendships with his old facility. He frequently said, "Nobody knows me here." And yet he perhaps won more affection than he knew. His Eastern friends did all that they could to sustain and cheer him with affectionate letters. The Mendham people, hearing that fruit was hard to get in the Northwest, sent at different times six barrels of canned and other fruit, and sent, besides, barrels of Christmas gifts to the household. This was only one of the many ways in which they showed their love. No one was asked to contribute, and people who did not belong to his congregation begged to be allowed to testify in this way their gratitude for special acts of kindness shown by him.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1885,

his youngest child was born. She received the name of father and mother both, Annie Williams Cochran. Her little life was a ray of sunshine in a shady place, for she was a most lovely child. She only lived a little over two years, and followed her father to the bright home above. Of such gentle, loving, docile, happy spirits is the kingdom of heaven.

After cold weather set in he improved a good deal until March, when he undertook work for the Young Men's Christian Association, interested himself in the poor about him, and sought out ways, as he always did, of quietly doing good. Toward spring there was a series of revival meetings in the church, which he attended. At one of these his voice was heard for the last time in public. The idea of the address was, "I surrender to Jesus Christ." Those who loved him hoped that this effort was an earnest of return to active life, but, alas! their hopes were doomed to disappointment.

Mr. Cochran had entertained, all along, the expectation of at least visiting his Eastern home in the following summer, but in March his physician told him that this would be unwise. He was, as he expressed it, "bitterly disappointed." He now decided that it would not be right for him to continue his connection with the Mend-

ham church as pastor, and he wrote resigning the charge. It was a sharp trial to him, and he wrote to a friend: "It seems to me that, if it were God's will, I would rather die than sever all these tender ties." The people accepted his resignation with equal regret. The following letter was written him by the session.

"MENDHAM, Apr. 18, 1886.

"OUR DEAR AND HONORED PASTOR:

"The session of the Church, after considering carefully and prayerfully and sorrowfully your communication of March 17, and having laid the matter before the people at their regular parish meeting on the 3d inst., have felt constrained to agree with yourself in the decision that, under the circumstances, a dissolution of the pastoral relation would perhaps be the wisest thing that could be done for the interests of the church. It is unnecessary to add that this conclusion has been arrived at only at the sacrifice of feelings of the purest and warmest love and affection. We have but followed the feeling, indicated in your letter, of one whom we have been accustomed and *loved* to follow, when you say that the interests of Christ's cause should come before every other consideration, and that no personal attachment should be allowed to interfere therewith.

"When we remember your words of wisdom, and acts of unselfish kindness and devotion to the best interests of all this people, your noble

Christian character, known and read of us all through so many years, how could we arrive at such a conclusion except at a sacrifice of our cherished hopes for the future? We can truly say, with the great apostle, 'We remember how, from the first day you came among us, after what manner you have been with us at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations, and how you kept back nothing that was profitable for us, but have shewed us and taught us publicly and from house to house.' These things we can never forget. We can only, in the language of the same great apostle, 'commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.'

"Only one word in conclusion. The session desire to say that this action has been taken with the express understanding that when this is received by you, if, for any reason, you have changed your mind, then this action shall be null and void.

"AMZI M. BABBITT,
"MAHLON COLE,
"WILLIAM HILLARD,
"AARON DRAKE,
"WILLIAM A. WARD,
"JOHN M. CRANE,
"STEPHEN BABBITT."

The tender relations of the pastor and people were not severed by the ending of the pastorate,

but lasted to the end of his life, and will continue to eternity.

In the end of March he was taken with a severe attack of pleurisy, which for a time threatened life, but he rallied somewhat, though he never regained what he lost then. The General Assembly met that year in Minneapolis, and he had great pleasure in attending its sessions, where he met many old friends. One of the Mendham elders was a delegate, and Mr. Cochran greatly enjoyed a visit from him, and his daughter, who accompanied him.

He was advised to try the Colorado climate, and the doctor thought it was best for him to go without the responsibility of a family, and it was accordingly arranged that he should go to Colorado Springs early in June, while his family went to friends in their old home. This entire arrangement proved to be a great mistake, the climate of Colorado being unsuited to him, accelerating the action of the heart and hastening the softening of the lungs. The long journey drew heavily upon his waning strength, and the separation from his family tried his affectionate spirit and told on him physically.

It was a great sorrow to his friends in the East that he could not visit them. The Mendham people poured out upon his family all the

loving kindness that they would gladly have shown to him. They never tired of talking of him, and would speak of their longing to see him, with tears rolling down their cheeks. Irish women not known to them by sight would stop members of his family on the street to inquire for him and invoke blessings on him. At prayer-meeting the prayers for him were earnest and full. One night, after meeting, his wife said to two of the elders, "I hope you won't stop praying for Mr. Cochran now that he is no longer your pastor." Tears came into their eyes as they responded, "We never will;" and one of them went on to say, "There are many homes where he is prayed for night and morning, and I have often thought that the peace and calm and trust which he says he enjoys may be largely due to his people's prayers." The love of his people, shown in countless ways, was one reward he had for his life work in Mendham. It would have been worth while to labor for fifteen years to win such love, even were there no other result. But only the Great Day will declare all that he accomplished by his work of faith and labor of love. One result of his long illness was that he received the acknowledgment of his work in this life, and knew a little of how he was loved, while most men only get it after death.

Friends in Colorado Springs were exceedingly kind to him, and everything was done for his comfort. He never tired of telling how much kindness was shown to him. His eldest son was with him, and contributed much to his comfort. On hearing of the arrival of his family at Mendham, he wrote:

"Your letters were just like your dear loving self and the dear old home in whose sweet atmosphere they were written. I do not think in my weak state I could well stand the strong emotions that would come upon me were I in the midst of you. Even the description of your arrival agitated me so that I could hardly control myself. I see it all in imagination—oh how vividly! We should weep together if I were with you in that dear study of many precious memories. The Lord has met me there a good many times, and He will meet you there as He has done before, and give you comfort and strength.

"I have asked myself many times to-day, as before, 'Why did the Lord thrust us out from so much happiness, and, I think we may say, usefulness?' Two answers came to me—one, that He might show us the love of the people, and our love for them, as we would not have known it without trial; another, because there was danger of our loving this earthly home and friends too much. These are but parts of His ways. They will be plainer some day. Love

to all in the dear old home. Tell the children I wish we could 'play bear' once more together."

Mr. Cochran reached Colorado Springs June 19. On the 28th he consulted a doctor with large experience in lung troubles, and he told him that he thought the climate would be unfavorable for him: but that he had better wait a week or two and see. Later he told him that he must by no means stay; that neither Minnesota nor Colorado were suited to him, but that a low mountain region, like the Adirondacks or North Carolina, would be better. Mr. Cochran wrote, "What shall I do? My doctors in the East send me West, and the doctors in the West send me East." Finally, it was decided that he should go to Bayfield, Wisconsin. On the day before leaving Colorado he wrote the following verses, suggested by Cheyenne Cañon:

THE LORD'S LEADING.

I asked the Lord to lead me in the way;
I felt, but could not see, His powerful hand;
He urged me on, and would not let me stay
Where mountains, rocky, bare, forbidding, stand.

"O Lord," I cried, "the path I cannot see;
I cannot scale these mountains, steep and wild."
He led me, step by step, most patiently,
As father leads a weak and tottering child.

Lo! all at once the crags were cleft apart;
A crystal stream refreshed my eyes, my tongue;
Green branches waved and cheered my head, my heart.
What grandeurs, beauties, I now walked among!

And when through life I see no way before,
But troubles rise, like mountains wild and bare;
The God who made one cañon can make more—
I'll trust His leading and His loving care.

COLORADO SPRINGS, July, 1886.

On July 16 he went to Bayfield accompanied by his eldest son, and on the 1st of August was joined by his wife, who left the six youngest children under the care of friends in the East. Bayfield is very beautifully situated on the shores of Lake Superior, and Mr. Cochran almost lived on the broad piazza just outside his bedroom window. He thought the climate agreed with him better than that of any other place he had tried. The air was fine and bracing, the society in the hotel pleasant. Sunday was generally well observed, and Mr. Cochran took a great deal of pains in providing Sunday reading for his neighbors, lending books and leaving religious papers about the piazza in hopes of their being taken up. He had always been in the habit of filling his pockets with picture papers and little books for children, and in this out of the way place it was often matter of wonderment where his supplies came from. Children and adults soon learned

to love him, and even the little ones would come running to inquire, "How are you to-day, Mr. Cochran?"

Then began a period of great enjoyment, which he often spoke of as a sort of second honeymoon. He and his wife were together constantly, and with nothing to interrupt, no other duties to conflict. He seemed to be improving gradually, gained slowly in weight, was bright and cheery. Every one was kind and attentive, and seemed interested in him. His days were mostly spent in reading and writing on the piazza, from which there was a glorious view of the lake, with the Apostle Islands. In the afternoons he frequently drove in a buggy through the grand pine forests behind the hotel. His favorite drive passed the little Bayfield cemetery which was on one side of a valley, and on the other side was a slope on the top of which was a long line of magnificent pines which looked like a stately wall, and seemed to him like the border between the mortal and immortal countries. The pines of Bayfield suggested to him the following lines.

THE PINE TREE.

O pine, so strong, so grand, so high,
With foot on ground and head in sky,
Thou art a giant given birth,
To join the heavens and the earth.

Where thou thy lofty head dost rear
Are glorious prospects far and near,
Thou stretchest out thine arms to bless
The trees in strength and stature less.

Thine even branches make thee seem
Like ladder in the patriarch's dream
Down which the angel bands may go
To reach the homes of men below.

Thy trunk, so straight, so smooth, so round,
So firmly rooted in the ground,
Is like a temple pillar raised
That God may in the woods be praised.

Thou hast thy home in every clime,
Thou laugh'st at changes and at time,
So many seasons hast thou seen
And yet thy leaf is ever green.

How useful to mankind thou art!
When they have found thy soft, white heart,
How many comforts from thee come
To beautify and bless the home.

Oh that my heart and life might be
Straight, strong, well rounded, like to thee!
That I like thee might ever grow
To bring down heaven to men below.

May I like thee a pillar grand
Within the church forever stand,
May I to others help afford
To praise and glorify the Lord;

My life must be forever green,
For I eternal life have seen
And I may laugh at time. like thee,
'Tis swallowed in eternity.

The latter part of August the foliage began to change most brilliantly, and he enjoyed bringing in the bright leaves and berries to decorate his room. The air was so dry and warm that he would often sit on the piazza until 9 o'clock.

Rev. David R. Breed, D. D., of Chicago, was in Bayfield for a short time, and Mr. Cochran greatly enjoyed his society and his preaching. The Doctor had been obliged to leave St. Paul on account of his health, after a pastorate of fifteen years, and they talked with great fellow-feeling of the trial of leaving a loved and loving congregation. Mr. Cochran said to him one day, "I would rather be buried in Mendham, among my own people, than anywhere else." When he died this conversation was remembered, and the old churchyard at Mendham was chosen as the most appropriate place in which to lay him to rest.

Dr. Breed wrote of him after his death:

"Those who have heard his name only in connection with his work for Systematic Benevolence know but little of his pure, unselfish, affectionate nature. The secret of his beautiful life was doubtless his systematic devotion to the study of the Word of God for personal profit, and to his regular and frequent seasons of private prayer. From this sprang such intimate communion with God that his influence was of

that unusual kind which the ordinarily earnest Christian does not and cannot exert. It was rather the atmosphere conveying the sense of its possessor's close and constant abiding in Christ, and creating in one the desire to experience it also. And yet, like every example of that spirit which is truly Christ-like, there was nothing unnatural, artificial, or conventional about it, and nothing which separated him from the sympathies of his fellows. He was always approachable, and all were attracted to him.

"He spent some weeks last summer at Bayfield, Wis., where he won the hearts of villagers and summer boarders, and even transient visitors, and where the many kind inquiries after his health, and delicate ministries to his wants, indicated his hold upon their affections.

"I had some very delightful conversations with him at this time, as he spoke with perfect composure of the change which he knew was not far away. And this continued to the last. 'The end of that man was peace.' Of him I am sure it may be said that 'he walks in white now, for he was worthy.'"

On the 2d of October Mr. Cochran and his family took possession of a furnished house in St. Paul. His children, with their faithful nurse, were brought out from the East by one of his elders, who kindly made the long journey for the purpose. It was great pleasure to Mr. Cochran to see this dear friend, and great joy

to be united again with his children, whom he so tenderly loved, and separation from whom had been most keenly felt. The next day they all attended a communion service together ; it was most delighful to be in God's house once more, a united family, and the presence of the Mendham friend added much to the pleasure.

From this time Mr. Cochran failed rapidly in strength. First he dropped his horseback rides, then his walks, but continued till the very last to drive out every afternoon. He seemed to be going down day by day, and it was terrible to watch the ebbing of that precious life, powerless to do anything to stay the tide.

He tried to do his usual Christmas shopping, but had to give it up into other hands. He insisted on having the usual Christmas tree and Christmas greens, but was too feeble to do anything but sit in his big chair and watch the rest, so different from his old active self on such occasions. On Christmas morning he said to his eldest daughter, "Mary, be good to your mother and take care of her when I am gone." His brother's family all came to dine with him on Christmas Day. He always loved Christmas keeping. It was symbolical of his cheery, loving nature. He was always specially careful then and on Thanksgiving to "send portions

to them for whom nothing is prepared." On the evening of Christmas Day he wrote the following lines.

JESUS HAS DIED.

Why should I shrink from death?
Jesus has died;
He felt the laboring breath,
Jesus has died;
Weakness and pain He knew,
Parched throat and tongue that drew
"I thirst" from Him so true,
Jesus has died.

Why should I fear to die?
Jesus has died;
He paid the penalty,
Jesus has died;
For my sin crucified,
Wounded, blasphemed, denied,
Stung, He sin's sting defied,
Jesus has died.

Through Him I draw each breath,
Jesus has died;
He has the keys of death,
Jesus has died;
He lives who once was dead,
His hand upholds my head,
By Him I'm gently led,
Jesus has died.

Welcome, then welcome, death,
Jesus has died;
Sing my last lingering breath,
Jesus has died;

His dying words I hear,
Filling my heart with cheer,
"To-day thou'rt with me here,"
Jesus has died.

St. Paul, December 25, 1886.

On New Year's Day he had a delightful call from Dr. Seaver, a Congregational minister for whom he had a great affection. After his death a member of Dr. Seaver's church wrote: "At our communion service yesterday he made a very tender allusion to Mr. Cochran. In delicate and appropriate language, without referring to him by name, he spoke of his last call upon one whose presence for the last eighteen months had been a constant benediction to those of us who knew him, and when he inquired of him as to his hope, he replied in a whisper whose emphasis he should never forget, 'I have been a great sinner, but I have a greater Saviour.' Blessed saint! even in his last days he was doing his Master's work even more effectively than when preaching the gospel, by opening to those of us who knew him a glimpse of the light and peace of heaven."

After New Year's for four or five Sundays he did not get to church. The effort was too much for him; it was as much as he could do to get down to dinner. Until now he would never

admit that he suffered, always saying that he had a very comfortable sickness, but about this time, in conversation with an old Seminary friend who was very kind to him, he said that he suffered enough every day to die. But his patient courage and energy were wonderful. Few would have kept about as he did. He had much sleeplessness, and used to repeat Psalms to himself as he lay in bed, though sometimes he was too weak even for that. He spent a great deal of time each day over the Bible. He made it his study and delight. He said to his wife, one day, "You will find great comfort in the Psalms." She knew, though he did not say it, that he meant after the terrible separation came. Afterward it seemed as if the Psalms were a special message from him.

The house was dreadfully cold, the thermometer often standing indoors at 30° above zero in the mornings, and once at 20°. Water froze nightly in his room, and he said it took all his vitality to struggle with the cold. When he drove out, the cold air affected his lungs to such a degree that he could not speak for some minutes until he became accustomed to the low temperature. There was a pleasant open fire in the parlor, by which he sat much when he was once up.

He was very independent, and waited upon himself as long as he could, but he gradually gave up one thing after another, until at last he was dressed like a baby, having each garment warmed as it was put on.

Morning prayers were always held around his bedside, and after tea the family assembled in the parlor for prayers, which were always pleasant and informal, as of old. A St. Paul friend has written since Baby Annie's death, speaking of how she used to run and stand beside her papa when prayers began, and how he used to lay his dear hand upon her little head. He had never been able to toss her and frolic with her as he did with the other children, but would often ask to have her set upon his knee for a little while.

The last Sunday in January he made a great effort to go to church, in order to hear an old college friend, Rev. Mr. Burkhalter, of Cedar Rapids. He greatly enjoyed the sermon on "Noah walked with God," but as he drove home he objected to the statement that the type of piety in those days was higher than at present, saying: "I do not believe that. I believe that Dr. R. and Mrs F. walk with God just as truly as Noah and Enoch did."

Dr. Burkhalter wrote, a month later: "I shall

always remember with appreciation his remarkable kindness in coming to church that extremely cold Sabbath morning. I was thinking, that day, as I was preaching from the text, 'Noah walked with God,' that there before me in the pew sat a goodly illustration in our generation of the same walking with God and I knew that soon it could be written of him as of Enoch, 'And he was not, for God took him.' We will not mourn for him; we will only learn from him how lovely and desirable it is to follow Christ closely and to have no other Master."

Mr. Cochran suffered much from his throat and from catarrh, and on Tuesday, February 1, he consulted a specialist in these troubles. After a thorough examination he said to the doctor: "Before you say anything to me I want to talk to you a little. I know I am very ill, and could not be surprised by anything you can tell me about myself. I do not expect to live long, and my strong desire is to go East in the spring and be among my friends with my family. I know that my lungs are in the worst possible condition." The doctor said that he must admit that the lungs were very much diseased, but that a great deal of his coughing and discomfort and sleepless nights were due to

the length of his palate, which could easily be cut were he strong enough for the operation. When he arose to go the doctor said : "Now I have finished all I have to say to you. You go into the other room and let me talk to your wife a little." He then said that Mr. Cochran's lungs were indeed in a bad condition, one entirely gone and the other softened half-way down. It was wonderful that he could keep about as he did, and indicative of a great amount of resolution; that as he desired to go home he should be taken there as soon as possible, for he would soon be unable for the journey. To the objection that February and March were very bad months in the East, he said, "They are very bad months here. He will be as well off in New York as anywhere. The hope of seeing friends will brace him up for the journey, and after he gets home he will probably rally with the pleasurable excitement and be better for a while." The doctor thought that he might live three months, but he died two weeks from that day.

When Mr. Cochran was told that the doctor said that if he wanted to go home he must go soon, as he was stronger now than he would be in the spring, he seized eagerly upon the idea. "We will go as soon as we can get ready. How

long will it take?" He would not listen to the other side. "I want to go home. I want to see my friends." He never faltered in this resolution. Several times when asked if he felt that he had the strength for the journey, he replied, emphatically "I am going home." When it was said to him, "I hope you are not going for the family's sake?" "I am going for my own sake, too. I want to go home." He had suffered greatly from homesickness; and the thought that the doctor was advising him to go removed all obstacles, and the longing became irresistible. The great regret was that he had not gone in the fall, when he was stronger.

On Sunday, February 6, he went to church for the last time. It was Communion, and a most solemn service to his family, who felt that it was the last time they would be together at the Lord's table on earth. He sat holding his wife's hand throughout the service, his children and only brother all about him. It seemed as if they were standing with him by the side of the dark river which was so soon to divide them, and could almost see the chariots and angels on the other side that were to bear him from their sight. Oh, if only all could go together! "Would that we could die in pairs and companies!"

After service many came about him to say farewell. He said it as calmly and quietly as if he were going to Europe. He would say, as he shook hands with one and another, "I shall never see you again in this world, but we shall meet above." His composure kept all about him outwardly calm, but how hard it all was! "The cup of glory" must be very full and sweet "to wash down life's bitterest woes."

His sister-in-law came in to dinner, and in answer to her inquiries for his health he said: "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Again he repeated the verses, "I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Oh, spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more." Over and over again during his illness he made answer to those who inquired for his health, "Though the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day." As one said at his funeral, "We might almost fancy that at last the inner man became so strong and glorious that the poor, weak, outer man could no longer hold the spirit, and he went up higher to await that body which shall be like the Master's own."

He sat for a long time that afternoon before the open fire in the parlor with his wife, and

had a very full and confidential and tender talk. He said, "I cannot stand it to be agitated, but I think we should talk freely about the future." It was a most sacred hour. God helped them to an outward calmness; the time seemed too solemn for anything else.

After tea the family assembled for their usual Sunday evening services. The 14th of John was repeated, and then each one chose a hymn to be sung. His turn came last, and he chose, "Tarry with me, O my Saviour!" It was sung the next week at his funeral. Then all prayed in turn a short petition. His was the last prayer he ever prayed aloud. It was a lovely Sabbath day, tenderly to be remembered, even in the eternal Sabbath above.

The next few days were very busy. Friends were constantly coming in to say good-bye, and many sent in little delicacies for the journey. In spite of all the confusion, he was never allowed to miss being read to and attended to just as usual. Many were the loving words dropped which are treasured in the sorrowing hearts of the survivors. He said to his wife, "If there is any way to be with you, you may be sure I will come, and perhaps I can help you more there than I could here."

His sufferings were very great from a variety

of minor causes as well as from weakness and breathlessness. It seemed as if the whole system had broken down at once, and yet he was cheerful and patient, and full of love and trust. He was very grateful for all the services rendered to him, and said to his wife, "I don't believe there is anything you would not do for me."

The day before he left St. Paul he received a letter from a dear friend in the East, in which he spoke of his young brother as developing in Christian life and activity, and added that the young man had told him that he had finally been brought to Christ by a sermon of Mr. Cochran's on "Man shall not live by bread alone." His eyes filled with tears as he exclaimed, "Oh, isn't God good to let me know that!"

All through the winter he had been greatly interested in the revival which had been going on in Mendham. Very full accounts were written to him of it, over which he greatly rejoiced, and he had the letters read aloud at family prayers, so as to give direction to the prayers for the people, and in order that individual cases might be remembered. Doubtless many blessings were given in answer to the prayers of the dying and devoted pastor. Almost the last thing he did on the night he left St. Paul was

to write in a Bible which was a gift to a servant who had been very kind to him, her name and an appropriate text of Scripture. It was written in a very feeble and trembling hand, and the book was received with tears of gratitude. He never used his pen again.

On Thursday, February 10, he started with all his family for the home of his father-in-law, Mr. Carter, in New York. His brother accompanied him, and contributed greatly to his welfare. An officer of the road had placed his private car at his disposal, and made arrangements for the transfer of it across Chicago to the other railway. The first night was a very restless and suffering one. In the morning a doctor was telegraphed for to come on board the car at Chicago, and he gave him temporary relief, but the second night was still more trying, especially as his mind began to wander a little. Though he suffered much, he reiterated that he was having a very comfortable journey, better than he had expected, but it was very hard for those who attended him to witness his sufferings. On Saturday morning a doctor was again telegraphed for, and he traveled with him for some hours. As the doctor sat upon the state-room sofa opposite Mr. Cochran's bed, he entered into conversation with his brother,

in the course of which, the doctor said that he feared he was not a Christian. Mr. Cochran had been lying in a half conscious state, but this aroused him, and he said to his brother, "Please shut the door," and then raising himself upon his elbow, he addressed to the doctor an earnest appeal to accept of Christ as his Saviour, to which the physician listened with fast-flowing tears. Like his Master, he might have said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." All day long he failed so fast that it seemed as if he could never reach home alive. Rev. Dr. Kittredge, of New York, was on the sleeping-car, and came to the state-room to inquire for him, and when Mr. Cochran asked him to pray, he came in and closed the door, and prayed very earnestly for the dear sufferer.

He was lifted out of the car and into a carriage at New York, and when Mr. Carter's house was reached a strong young cousin took him up in his arms and carried him into the house, and up to his room. He stroked his face, and said, "This reminds me of old Princeton days when I used to carry you." He was delighted to be at home, and threw his arms around the necks of those who greeted him and kissed them. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "it is so good to be at home." He said to his father, "I have some-

thing that you have not." "What is that?" "A father's house to come to."

He was very happy all the next day, which was Sunday, and talked a good deal, but his friends discouraged this on account of his fatigue. It was hoped that he would live for many days yet, and it was not realized that this was the last opportunity for conversation. The few friends he saw he greeted very lovingly, sometimes saying, when a quiet kiss was given, "Is that all?" and drawing them back for a more demonstrative embrace.

On Monday morning his mind wandered slightly, but he could always be recalled by a word of explanation. When his oldest girl entered the room, he exclaimed, "Oh my darling daughter!" To an aunt he said, "We have been very graciously dealt with." His brother-in-law said to him, "It is a grand thing to have our glorious hope." He answered him with great earnestness, "Oh, it's everything, it's everything!" His wife said to him, "Do you love me, Will?" He looked at her with such affection, and said, "Indeed I do!" These were his last utterances, and it was typical of the earnest Christian and devoted husband that his heavenly hope and his earthly love were the last things to which he gave expression. Sev-

eral times he opened his eyes upon a loved one who sat beside him, with a beaming glance of tenderness, and motioned with his lips to be kissed.

The doctor had said that morning that he might live for weeks, but as the day passed he sank into a deep sleep, from which he could not be aroused, though he took nourishment and medicines as they were given. In the afternoon two of the younger children, Henry and Kitty, were taken by their aunt to her home in Boonton, as the household was so large in New York. They kissed him good-bye, but he did not rouse, or notice them.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, February 15, the family assembled around his bed. He lay sleeping quietly, with such a calm and lofty look that it seemed as if his thoughts were already in heaven.

> "Asleep in Jesus. O how sweet
> To be for such a slumber meet!"

One of the children whispered in his mother's ear, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Another, "Mamma, 'God is our refuge and strength.'" His brother made a prayer, in which he thanked God for the beautiful life that had been lived

among us, for all his unselfishness and devotion and lovely traits, and committed him into the hands of the One who loved him best. At 11 o'clock some one said, "He is going!" It seemed as if we could not let that go which was the life of our life, but it went. The breath came slower and slower, and then ceased. There was no sign of suffering or struggle; nothing but a look of lovely, peaceful calm upon his face. He was prepared for his burial by hands that loved him. His son repeated over him the words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." His dear ones loved to linger by his side. There was something in his face so high and calm and noble that it quieted their grief.

When the telegram announcing his death arrived at Boonton, little Kitty's aunt took her up on her knee and said, "When you left papa yesterday he was very ill; he could not look at you or speak to you; but now he will never be sick any more." The little one looked up brightly and said, "Oh, isn't that good?" A day or two afterward she slipped quietly into the room where her mother lay weeping on the sofa, and putting her arms gently about her neck, whispered, "Mamma, Papa is happy in heaven!" A year later her beautiful golden

head was laid beside her Papa's, and Kitty, too, was happy in heaven.

On Thursday afternoon a service was held in the house of Mr. Carter in New York, at which Dr. Hamilton, Dr. Aikman, and Rev. Mr. De Camp took part. Mr. Cochran had desired to be buried in Mendham, and a beautiful spot was provided by his loving people under the shadow of the church for which he had labored so long and so lovingly, and overlooking the parsonage—the home of many happy years. On Friday, the 18th of February, he was taken there. Everything was done that thoughtful love could suggest. The church was beautifully draped by loving hands. For a little while the dear form rested in the parsonage which he had so long brightened with his presence. It was sad to think how he had longed for that home, but never was brought to it until he was cold in death.

A very large and sorrowful assembly gathered in the church, for he had been widely known, and loved wherever he was known. The session bore in the precious casket, and laid it on the spot where he had stood to speak his farewell words to the people. As they did so the choir chanted, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," and afterward Dr. Theodore

White made a beautiful prayer, in which he thanked God for "the grace which abounded in this dear brother, and enabled him to make such full proof of his ministry, and endowed him with such fervor as to stand for so many years in this place, doing faithfully the work of a minister of Christ, and endearing unto him not only this people, but all those who knew him." The hymn "Tarry with me, O my Saviour!" was then sung, and Dr. John C. Rankin, whom Mr. Cochran had long reverenced as a father, made a most affecting and beautiful tribute to the character of one whom he regarded as his dearest friend in the ministry. He spoke of him as the ideal Christian gentleman, whose courtesy required no effort or thought, but simply shone out in the whole man—as the model husband and father, whose own household exemplified the idea that the family was the emblem and the training-school of heaven; as the minister thoroughly equipped mentally for his work, giving himself wholly to it for the love of it, and for the love of Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

The choir then sang the anthem, "Servant of God, well done!" and the Rev. Dr. Erdman, of Morristown, a dear friend of Mr. Cochran, spoke in touching terms of his character and work. He said of him:

"He always reminded me of the Apostle John, the beloved of the Lord. For this man was as firm as a rock; steadfast and true, full of zeal and full of fire, and yet all the while as gentle as a woman. Of the unselfishness of his character I need hardly speak. Was there ever a storm in the dead of winter, was there ever any inclemency of the weather, that kept this man at home when he thought that he could do some good for his fellow-men or for his Master? He never counted anything too hard or too self-sacrificing; he was always willing to spend and be spent in the Master's service. If there is a man or woman in this parish who heard Brother Cochran's preaching or witnessed his life, who will be found at last cast out from the Master's presence, it will not be Brother Cochran's fault, and it will be a dreadful moment for the soul of anyone who has been permitted to know this man, if, when it answers to God, it shall be found wanting; for you may bring up all the arguments you please against the Word of God and the holy religion of Jesus Christ, here is an argument—this man's life, and this man's words, and this man's character—to meet all these, for this was indeed a *Christian* man. May these boys, these sons of dear Brother Cochran, remember their father as a man of God and servant of Jesus Christ, and may it be their ambition to be something like father, to do some such things as father did, and to be such a Christian as father was, and God will bless them indeed."

One of the most impressive parts of the ser-

vice followed when Mr. Thomas Cochran arose, and, with figure and voice so like his brother's, stood with his hand upon the casket, and spoke in his name a message which might have come from the beloved pastor's own lips. Rev. Mr. Huntting, of Andover, made an earnest and tender closing prayer; the hymn "It is not death to die" was sung, and Dr. Erdman pronounced the benediction. The choir softly sang "Shall we gather at the river?" while the congregation passed around the coffin, taking a fond farewell of their dear friend and pastor, whose face they should see no more till the heavens pass away.

The Mendham people were greatly touched by Mr. Cochran's choosing to sleep his last sleep among them. One lady writes, "Mendham is honored by being chosen his last resting-place;" another, who had already buried there her parents, husband, and children, "The churchyard does not seem lonely to me since Mr. Cochran lies there." His grave on the hill-top is a perpetual sermon to them, emphasizing all the teachings of his life. It is constantly visited by loving steps, and adorned with fresh flowers. In one of his sermons, years ago, he had spoken of the lovely and fragrant flowers, sweet alyssum, lilies of the valley, pansies, and

mignonette, as being emblematical of the Christian character, humble and sweet. One of the congregation, remembering this, has planted them upon his grave. The turf about is kept short and thick and green by no hired hands.

The lesson of that grave upon the hill-top is one not only of memory, but of hope. There the pastor, with his congregation about him, awaits a glorious resurrection. As one of his own little ones remarked on the evening of the funeral, "It may not be very long before we see him again, for Jesus may come to-night, and when He comes Papa will come with Him."

The spot where he rests is marked by a tall granite obelisk, on which is the inscription:

"LET ME SERVE."
REV. I. W. COCHRAN.
SEPT. 11, 1841.
FEB. 15, 1887.
FOR SIXTEEN YEARS PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH.
"HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM, AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE."

In the church is a very beautiful tablet, on which are inscribed the same name and dates, and below, his message to his flock:

"Tell my dear people I died in the faith I always preached, and earnestly hope to meet them in glory."

PASTORAL LETTERS.

THE following pastoral letters were written by Mr. Cochran to his congregation on sacramental occasions: the first, when he was taken ill in New York; and the second, soon after he had gone West; the third, just after he had resigned his pastoral charge. They were written from the heart, and to the heart, and read with deep emotion by the clergyman who administered the ordinance, and listened to by the congregation with streaming tears:

"NEW YORK, JUNE 11, 1885.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

"Your pastor has greatly desired to be present with you in the flesh, and to commune with you to-day, as you commune with our common Lord. He had reason to hope at one time that this privilege might be granted us, but the state of his health has forbidden, and we must bow to the will of the Master who loves us and who 'doeth all things well,' but though absent in body, he can be present in spirit, and though we are separated by many miles of space, we can be nearer to each other in our union to Christ than by the vision of the eyes or the touch of the hands.

"I had fondly hoped that, though laid aside

for a time from active work among you in the ministry, my family and myself might still dwell with you until I had recovered my health and was able to resume my duties.

"It is probable that such relief from labor would be sufficient to restore my health without any change of climate. But the best medical advice which can be had has counselled me that my restoration will be much more certain if I spend the next year in the West. In fact, these advisers insist that my recovery is very doubtful if I remain East, but almost certain if I seek a Western climate.

"I hope during the present week to return to my home to remain for two or three weeks, when we will be able to speak parting words in private.

"But the state of my health will not permit my addressing you in public, and it occurred to me that this occasion would be a suitable one for me to send to you, as a church, some words of counsel and farewell.

"I cannot tell you how sad I am to leave you. I need not. Our love is mutual. You feel the separation as much as I do. You have shown your love to me in many ways during these fifteen years of my ministry among you. As I look back on that ministry, I am conscious that it has had many defects, but love for my people, and earnest desire for the welfare of their souls, have not been lacking.

"I can say to-day in the presence of Him who knoweth all hearts, and with these solemn symbols about us, that there is not a soul, young

or old, in the parish that I have not borne on my heart before God in prayer, and for whose salvation I have not longed.

"I thank God that, though I cannot labor for your salvation during the year to come, I can still pray for it.

"Where can we find better comfort in our sadness, dear brethren, than in this ordinance?

"What sadness there was at its first celebration! What a parting there was then! The disciples did not realize it, but the Master did, and he spoke words of comfort which they remembered long after and recorded for our help. 'Let not your heart be troubled.' 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.' 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you.' Though your pastor is removed from you for a time, Christ is still with you. Though we are separated from one another, His spirit will still dwell with us and guide us. Oh that we might all live according to those counsels of our Lord at the first Supper; that we might abide in Him as the branch in the vine and so bring forth much fruit; that we might all love one another as He has loved us!

"Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' They gained something in the gift of the Spirit and in a more active and independent spiritual life by separation from Christ. If your pastor's absence leads you to more dependence on Christ, to more individual activity in His service, it will be a blessing. I do most earnestly exhort you who

are the Lord's people to be more earnest in prayer, more studious of the word, more faithful in attending church and prayer-meeting and Sabbath-school, more zealous in working out your own salvation, and more active in trying to save others than you have ever been before.

"Be liberal, also, in offering of your substance for the work of the Lord.

"'The elders which are among you I exhort: Feed the flock of God which is among you, not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, yea, all of you be subject one to another.' We have reason to rejoice that God in His providence has recently given us additional elders, so that the church has sufficient officers at this trying time. I have no doubt that it will be safe under their direction.

"I must say a few words to you who have not partaken of this feast to-day. Some of you I have seen grow up from childhood, some of you I have baptized, all of you I have loved and prayed for. You are lost forever unless your sin is washed away in that blood which was shed for the remission of sins. You can have no life unless you feed by faith on the Son of God. Why starve any longer when there is a feast at hand? take and eat, and live forever.

"Brethren, pray for us, for me and my family, as we shall for you. May we have the blessed privilege of sitting down together again at the 'Supper' on earth, and if this is denied us, may we have the still more blessed privilege of sit-

ting down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"Your loving pastor in the Lord,
"I. W. COCHRAN."

"WYOMING, MINN., September 2, 1885.

"DEARLY BELOVED,

"It has occurred to me that a few words from your pastor might be appropriate at your communion season, especially as your acting pastor is not present with you.

"You will be glad to know that your prayers have been answered, and that my general health has improved greatly since I came to the West. But I am much troubled with hoarseness, and could hardly now speak, loudly enough to be heard, the few sentences which I uttered the last Sabbath I was with you. It will be some time, I fear, before my voice recovers its former power, so that I still need your prayers for the restoration of bodily health, if it be the Lord's will.

"Our Heavenly Father means to teach us patience and faith by this trial, and we ought not to wish it removed until we learn all that He desires us to learn by means of it. I can testify that He gives me peace and comfort in Himself day by day.

"May He do the same for you all, whether you are under affliction or not!

"I rejoice that although we are so far separated by space, we are one in Christ and can commune together by His Spirit.

"I shall observe the hour of your communion

service as a time of special prayer, and thus meet with you more nearly than some who may sit at your sides, but who do not commune with our Lord and with us.

> "'There is a place where spirits blend,
> Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
> Though sundered far, by faith they meet
> Around one common mercy-seat.'

"It seems to me that this fall communion season should impress on us many lessons from the world about us. The earth is ripening her fruits day by day, and we are enjoying both the abundance and the freshness of garden and orchard.

"So the Church, as the garden of the Lord, ought to be yielding Him fresh fruits of praise and prayer, of self-denial and service, of love and joy, every day.

"We are too apt to be content with offering that which is stale in thought or experience—the same words, the same feelings we had long ago, without any freshness or increase.

"May we all realize that the Lord Jesus Himself is present with us to-day, and may new thoughts of love and faith go forth towards Him—not new because we have never known them before, but new in freshness and strength!

"This epistle will bring vividly before you the face of your pastor, who is so many miles away. May the blessed symbols of the Supper bring more vividly to your view Him 'whom, not having seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"May this communion season be fruitful in resolutions which shall perform needed service for Christ and His Church.

"You are laying your plans for gathering in the fruits of the field. Plan also to gather fruit for the heavenly garner.

"The time most fitted for spiritual work in the Sabbath-school and the prayer-meeting is at hand.

"There are many yet unconverted. By faith and labor they can be brought in. Conversion leading to confession and church membership is one of the best tests of the faithfulness of the Lord's people.

"How many souls have we won to Christ during the last three months or the last year?

"Dear friends who are still without the church, I saw at parting good evidence of your love to me. Oh that you would love and serve that Saviour, who loves you and died for you, whom I have tried to preach to you.

"I rejoice to learn that you all are receiving your acting pastor as an ambassador for Christ. May many be reconciled to God, and many edified and established by his ministry!

"I need hardly say that my family, who are members with you of the same visible church, unite with me in Christian salutation and communion in the Lord.

"May the Lord make you abound in every good word and work!

"Your loving pastor in the Lord,

"I. W. COCHRAN."

"To the Church and Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, N. J.

"Dearly Beloved Brethren:

"The Lord has willed that the ties which have so long bound us together as pastor and people should be sundered. But we are still one in Christ. There are cords which never can be broken because they unite us to the eternal heart of Christ. In the house of God, at the communion table, we can have fellowship still one with another.

"I want to thank you as a people for all you have been to me and mine, for your teachableness, your affection, your appreciation of my efforts for you. As I look back I realize many imperfections in my ministry, but you kindly forgave them, as I believe the Lord has.

"Especially during this time of trial have my family and myself felt the support of your sympathy and your prayers. Pray for us still, as we do and shall for you.

"I would testify here to the love and grace of Christ in all this affliction. He has given me almost uniform comfort and peace, so that I have often been happier than in times outwardly more prosperous. From my own experience I can commend this 'God of all comfort' this all-sympathizing Saviour, to those of you who have never tasted His love.

"I believe that one lesson which the Lord is teaching us in these experiences is, that nothing must come between us and Him. He must be, He is, worthy to be more than home or friends or church or pastor. He is constantly

saying to us as He says in the ordinance of the Supper, 'This do in remembrance of Me.' 'This is My cup of suffering, drink ye all of it.'

"We can never keep near to Christ except by the means of grace. 'Remember the words that I spake unto you while I was yet present with you.' Enter regularly 'into thy closet and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret.' 'Search the Scriptures,' for they testify of Christ. 'Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together' in the Sabbath worship and the weekly prayer-meeting, 'as the manner of some is:' Come to the Lord's table with preparation and prayer, that you may feed on Him. 'Teach these things diligently to thy children,' and pray with and for them.

"Dear children of the church, in baptism you were put into the arms of Christ, why turn your faces away from Him and struggle to get back to the world? You are His, and you ought to own it.

"I beseech you all to show your faith by your works. A church like ours ought to be an irresistible power in a community. It would be if every member were filled with the spirit. Strive to convert your brother from the error of his way and save his soul from death. Testify and work against liquor selling and every moral evil. Give systematically and proportionately 'as the Lord hath prospered you.' 'Be at peace among yourselves, and the very Lord of peace be with you.' Avoid even unkind thoughts toward your brethren. Hold up the hands of your future pastor as you have held up mine. May the

Lord speedily guide you to one whom you can thus support and aid!

"Dear friends who are still outside of the church, and many of you yet out of Christ, I know your love to me—oh that you would love my Saviour and yours!

"Dearly beloved, we shall meet again, I hope in this world, I am sure in the world to come. 'The things which are unseen are eternal.' In that world above, we shall remember the many blessed associations we have had together here, and shall be the happier and better for them. Samuel Rutherford's thought has been often in my mind, with a change of words:

"'Dear Mendham on the hillside
To me thou still art dear;
E'en from the verge of heaven,
I'll drop for thee a tear.
Oh, if one soul from Mendham
Meet me at God's right hand,
My heaven will be two heavens
In Immanuel's land!'

"I am now, and forever will be,

"Yours in Christ,

"I. W. COCHRAN."

SERMONS.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

AS TAUGHT BY THE APOSTLE PAUL IN I COR. XVI. 1, 2.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Preached in the Chapel of the Seminary at Princeton, Sunday, January 11, 1885.

THE dignity and importance of Christian giving is suggested by the context. The Apostle Paul has just penned that glorious song of victory over death — which is no less a hymn for being found embedded in prose. He has given a general exhortation to faithfulness as an inference from the doctrine of immortality, and, without any such break as would be indicated by the division into chapters, he urges the more specific duty of collecting money for a particular object.

The position given to the subject here well illustrates the standing it has in the whole Word of God. It has been closely associated with many of the most important events in the history of the Church. It shines in their light. It is con-

nected with that mysterious King of Salem, who is used us a type of the Son of God, to whom Abraham paid tithes; it is found at the foot of that ladder which the patriarch saw reaching up to the sky when he proclaimed the place "the gate of heaven," and made his vow of consecration; it accompanies the "church in the wilderness," as is seen in the bountiful gifts for the first house of worship to the true God; it brings joy to the greatest of Israel's kings in his closing years because the people have offered so willingly, and adds glory to Solomon as he builds and dedicates the temple; it is an important part of the worship of God in all the offerings and sacrifices of the old economy. Nor is it less prominent in the new. It is connected with the birth of Christ in the bringing of the wise men's gifts; it lends assistance to His work as the women minister to Him of their substance; it anoints His body beforehand for the burial with the precious alabaster box of ointment; it furnishes a new tomb for Him when dead, and spices and ointment to embalm Him; it has an important place in His final welcome to His saints—"Come ye blessed of my Father," "Well done, good and faithful servant;" it is a part of the Pentecostal blessing, when the disciples had all things common.

It is just as prominent against the dark background of Bible sins and judgments. The sin of our first parents, the first murder, the sin of Achan, the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the betrayal of the Son of God, the eternal doom of the wicked—all are represented as the result of that covetousness and selfishness which has manifested itself so often in the abuse or misuse of property.

Truly a subject which has such a place as this in the Scriptures and in human destiny ought to be prominent in our thinking, our teaching, and our practice.

In regard to its importance, Dr. Alex. Duff wrote as follows to the convener of the committee of the Free Church of Scotland on systematic giving:

"The object is one not of secondary but of primary importance. But for ages it has been so neglected that much time and labor and faith and patience, with the accompanying blessing of God's Holy Spirit, will be needed to work it into the mind and heart of the church at large. The spirit of the age in its rampant secularity and luxuriousness is sadly against it. But that is no reason, but the contrary, for strenuously persevering in the good work. If revivalism is to end merely in a spiritual luxuriousness and self-complacency and self-enjoyment, though

of a decidedly higher kind than the worldly and the carnal—it will only prove a more refined kind of selfishness, the very opposite of the outgoing spirit—the divinely exemplified spirit—of self-denying love. Ah! if there were more of this divine spirit amongst us, soon would the object of your committee find a development and enlargement that would speedily fill the whole earth with its blessed fruits. Meanwhile, let faith, with perseverance and prayer, be the motto.

"Yours very sincerely,

"ALEXANDER DUFF."

The text is one of the latest utterances of the Word of God on the subject of giving; it is the fruit of all God's teaching and training of His people on this subject; it is the thought of the greatest apostle, who practiced what he preached; and it is practical; it not only reveals principles, but shows how they are to be applied.

It is not to be regarded as laying down by apostolic authority an absolute rule, without which there can be no true giving. If this were so, many of the noblest gifts in the history of the Church must be considered as defective. The rule has authority, but it is more the authority of apostolic example than of apostolic ordinance.

It was an apostolic order to the Corinthian Church. The word, "I have given order," is a very strong one, and it would have been sin for the Corinthians to fail to observe the form as well as the substance of the rule. It is not according to the spirit of the gospel, nor the custom of the apostle, to prescribe rules and methods to bind the consciences of the saints. We are not taught, except by inference, what forms or rites or modes of worship should be observed. Family worship is nowhere directly commanded, nor the times of private devotion. Anyone who reads the eighth and ninth chapters of second Corinthians as a commentary on this passage must see how careful the apostle is to guard the individual liberty of the giver: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." (2 Cor. viii. 8.)

But the method of giving here indicated has the authority of apostolic example, and when we remember that some of the most important institutions of the Christian Church—the Lord's day and infant baptism—rest upon this ground, such example should bear with no light weight on our consciences.

What are the lessons, then, which come to us, from this apostolic direction, to many of the

churches of his day, as to the principles and practice of Christian giving?

I. We are reminded of the true object of giving. The apostle was bringing to the attention of the churches the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem. To help them was a matter of true benevolence and Christian duty. In writing to the Romans, Paul says that the Gentiles are debtors to the saints in Jerusalem for the gospel. The object for which a gift is bestowed affects its value as a benevolent act. In a company of ministers, some of them prominent in the Church, where systematic giving was the subject of discussion, it was argued by some that whatever a Christian uses for the supply of his own need is really used for God, and consecrated to Him, that whatever he spends in the education of his children is given to God, that ministers having given their life and time to God, are not bound to give to the objects of benevolence. But giving ourselves, our families, our services, is not the giving contemplated here and elsewhere in the Word of God when benevolent gifts are spoken of. Almsgiving, giving to the poor, or to those that need, is distinctly separated from such giving. Christ recommended a different giving from this to the rich young ruler when He said, "Go thy

way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." It is a different giving upon which the rewards and punishments of the last day are based. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." This shows us, as do many other texts, that all true giving has a higher object than man, however needy; it is giving to the Lord. "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord." "Honor the Lord with thy substance," etc.

When we view the matter in this light, is it possible that a minister can be relieved of the duty or deprived of the privilege of giving? Can he shut his eyes and close his heart against the needs of the poor in body and poor in soul? Has he nothing for the heathen or the freedmen or his brethren in the Lord because he is working for the Lord more than other men? His work is not all gratuitous. He gains something by his labor on which God and his fellow-man have a claim. The love which has led him to consecrate his life to Christ should lead him to give more freely than others. It was so with Christ. What property had He? None but what He wore, and what the traitor carried in the common bag. What did He leave? Nothing but the vesture on which they

cast lots. The great apostle to the Gentiles labored with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to the poor churches. He laid by nothing and left nothing.

The ministry generally are not negligent in this matter. There is no class of Christians that gives more in proportion to their means, But there are exceptions, and it is of such vital importance to our benevolent work that the ministers should lead the people by example as well as by precept, that the matter ought to be impressed on those who will soon be pastors and preachers.

It is well to observe, under this head, that there is a difference between giving to the support of the ministry and giving to the benevolent work of the church. The former is not pure benevolence. The ministry have a claim, in justice, on the ground of service rendered; the people receive a return for what is given to them. This distinction ought to be kept before the people, that they may feel more strongly the obligation to support the ministry, and may realize how small are their gifts to benevolence.

II. The apostle teaches us here what should be the character of Christian giving:

1. It should be spiritual. This is suggested by associating it with the first day of the week.

Chrysostom says: "Mark how he exhorts them in regard to time, for truly the day itself was sufficient to lead them to almsgiving. 'Wherefore call to mind,' he says, 'to what ye attained upon this day. All unspeakable blessings, and that event which is the root and beginning of our life, are connected with the day.' Further, the occasion is suitable for the exercise of zealous benevolence, inasmuch as it gives rest and relief from toil, and the spirit thus set free is more disposed to show mercy; and then the partaking of the communion, with its vast and great mysteries, itself inspires a spirit of great zeal."

We have only to look again at 2 Cor. viii. 7, to see what spiritual truths and exercises are connected with this matter of giving. It is called there a "grace," and those who neglect or slight it lose an important means of grace, as those do who slight the reading of the Word, or attendance on the social prayer-meeting. The highest Christian motive is appealed to in urging it, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 9). He speaks of the money contributed as "this grace which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord" (v. 19).

The giving of money is frequently associated with prayer in the Scriptures, as in the case of

Cornelius: "Thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God." We should ever remember without God's blessing on the gift it will accomplish nothing. Laying by in store and treasuring may also remind us of Christ's words about laying up treasure in heaven. We need to give, then, and to teach others to do so, for its blessing on the soul of the giver. We need to give with thoughtfulness and prayer and faith. The mere bestowing in charity of a gift, however large, is not true giving, any more than the mere addressing of eloquent words to God is praying.

2. Christian giving should be thoughtful and deliberate. The apostle advises to "lay by in store" when there is time for consideration, that the money might be ready when he arrived. He did not propose to do, as so many ministers do in our modern churches, to state suddenly without giving notice beforehand, that a collection would be taken up for the poor Jews. He gave them time to think about the object and about their own means. There should be, in every church, some plan of collection which would accomplish the same end. People should know at the beginning of each year the main objects to which they are expected to give. If they do, they can readily inform themselves as

to the needs of the various causes. But pastors should not rely upon their doing so, but give them from the pulpit information of all the benevolent work of the church. As Dr. Hall says, in his lectures to the Rochester students, "We have no right to dictate to men that they should give to an object by simply announcing a collection, without explaining the needs of the cause." He tells of some church where cards are sometimes put into the collection plate with the amount of the donor's gift, that on one occasion one of the large givers was seen to alter the sum on his card from $500 to $1,000 as his pastor explained the need.

But in order that we may instruct others, we must be well informed in regard to the benevolent work of the church ourselves.

Young men, it is worthy of your study. It relates to matters of the deepest interest, both to God and man. Do not forget nor pass it by in your many occupations here. You have already shown your interest in the progress of Christ's kingdom in foreign lands in the inter-seminary alliance. But the other departments of our church work deserve attention also. Patriotism and religion combine in the Home Mission and Freedmen's causes to plead for our study. The Sustentation cause, which has such

important relations to ministerial support, which has been successful in Scotland, which was begun in our church under such advocates as Dr. Charles Hodge, Dr. McCosh, and Dr. Jacobus, needs to be sustained by new assistance, or it will die altogether. Nor is there one of our church causes that does not suggest food for deep thought and earnest interest. Let us learn to give, then, as thinking, reasonable beings.

3. Giving should be individual. "Let everyone lay by Him in store." Everyone should have the privilege and feel the responsibility of giving. God deals with men as individuals. "Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" — the slothful servant who "hid his lord's money," as well as the one who doubled his talents. No one can repent or believe for you and me, and no one can give for you and me. No one can appreciate for another the blessedness of forgiveness, and no one can enjoy for another the blessedness of giving. The apostle has this in view when he recommends that everyone "lay by him in store." This is more emphatic in the original where the expression is *by himself*. It is indicated apparently that there should be a home treasury, and not merely a church one. At least it has been so understood by most commentators. This is

Chrysostom's comment: "The apostle does not say, 'Let him bring it into the church,' lest he might feel ashamed of the sum; but having by gradual additions swelled his contribution, 'let him produce it when I come; for the present lay it up at home, and make thine own house a church, and thy little box a treasury. Become thyself a guardian of consecrated wealth —a self-ordained steward of the poor. Thy charitable mind entitles thee to this priesthood.' Let us make a little chest for the poor at home. Near the place where you stand praying, there let it be put; and as often as you enter in to pray, first deposit your alms and then send up your prayer. You would not wish to pray with unclean hands, so neither do it without alms. If you have this little treasury, you have a defence against the devil. You give wings to your prayer. You make your house sacred, having provision for the king laid up there in store." (Homily, xvi. 1 Cor. 1.) If there were more such treasuries, there would be more giving or less praying. Mr. Ross, who did a great deal for this cause in Ireland, tells us of a certain elder with a great gift in prayer, but inclined to be narrow, who attended one of his meetings and became convinced that whatever he gave he ought first to pray over. Being

more than a mere professor, the next Sabbath he took the amount he usually gave and tried to pray over it, but could not—doubled it, and still could not ; and it was not until he had increased it fourfold that he felt he could honestly lay it at the feet of his Saviour.

How many Christians are there, how many are there here who thus consecrate their gifts by prayer? At our tables we ask God to bless His gifts to us ; should we not ask Him to bless what He gives through us to others?

Let us not make exceptions where God has not made them. Should the poor give? Remember the widow's mite. Should those dependent on church support give? Christ and His apostles lived by voluntary gifts, and they remembered the poor. Should the minister give to the church for which he is laboring? Remember how Christ paid the temple tax. Should women give? Let the women of the gospels and the noble women of our own day answer. Should children give? Yes, if we would teach them to obey and practice God's commands.

If we could only secure this universal, individual, spiritual giving, how blessed would be the results—not only to the receivers, but to the givers. Wherever it has been accomplished

in any measure, surprising fruits have been seen.

Perhaps the two most remarkable churches of modern times, for their success under difficulties and their rapid growth, have been the Free Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church. In the former Dr. Chalmers devised a plan for weekly contributions, and a deacon and elder were appointed for each district to superintend the work of the collectors or to go with them. Sometimes the deacon was a collector. It would be well to revive this office in our own churches, and use our deacons to help forward in each congregation the benevolent work of the church. As to the result in the Free Church, Dr. Chalmers says: "The tendency is to elevate the platform of humble life; and the effect of its payments, so far from being to impoverish or depress, is, through the medium of character and principle, or by the elastic operation of moral causes, to raise and uphold our people in a far higher economic status."

This effort to secure gifts from each individual was the origin of the "class" system in the M. E. Church. The local church was divided into sections, and assigned to a leader to collect gifts from each. Afterward Wesley saw that the method would be a good one for training in all departments of Christian work.

Let everyone of us here examine his own practice in this matter and resolve to correct what has been inconsistent with the high standard and beneficial method of giving laid down here.

4. Giving has its social and public as well as its individual side. There has been a difference among commentators as to whether the apostle intended that the gifts here referred to should be laid up at home or brought to the church treasury. Dr. Hodge, contrary to most modern writers, takes the latter view. He thinks that this is implied by the mention of the day of public worship, by the use of the word "laying by in store" (or "treasuring" literally) and by the object of the apostle's direction, that there should be no gathering when He came. Whatever may be the truth about this passage, it is certain that the offering of gifts for the poor has always been a part of Christian worship. When we regard these gifts in the true light as offered to God, we are reminded that such offering in public has been the universal custom of worshipers, Pagan, Jewish, and Christian. This is recognized as a part of worship in the New Testament and in nothing more strikingly than in the use of the word "communion." Dr. Addison Alexander says of

it in his *Commentary on Acts* (II. 42), where it is rendered 'fellowship:' "We may understand the historian as saying that the infant church was constantly engaged in mutual communion, both by joint repasts and sacramental feasts and charitable distribution. This last is, in actual usage, the prevailing application of the word in the New Testament. (Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. viii. 4; ix. 13; Heb. xiii. 16.) He adds it was at their social meals that the Eucharist was administered and their charities dispensed."

There is a striking use of the verb, which has the same root, in Hebrews, where is is said, "To do good and to communicate, forget not." It could be easily shown that the early church looked upon such gifts as a part of worship. Our own directory for worship recognizes this, but makes a bare mention of it; and the General Assembly's Committee on Systematic Benevolence has before it a proposition, through an overture from the Presbytery of Cleveland, committed to it by the last assembly, to amend the directory by fuller statements on this subject. Practically, while the collection is usually taken at the time of worship, it is by no means generally regarded as a part of the worship, but is taken in a formal, careless way. Are we not thus

losing a public means of grace as well as a private one?

Dr. Taylor, of New York, says on this subject in a recent sermon, "The making of contributions for benevolence, in every form of it in which the Church is engaged, is as really a communion service as is the observance of the Lord's Supper. The same word is used in reference to both; and both alike are manifestations of the oneness of all the people of Christ in their common Lord." We can readily see that this public worship by offerings to God will help the private setting apart, as public prayer helps private prayer. Would it not be wise to make this a part of the worship where it has not been made so, or where it has been discontinued? Would it not be well to accompany the public collection of offerings by special prayer, or by the reading of Scripture, that the worshiper may be in a proper frame to give? Might there not be wisdom in bringing to this house of prayer the money you contribute, in having sermons preached by these faithful teachers on the benevolent work of the Church, and in here praying for God's blessing on the gift as well as on the work?

III. But the apostle not only indicates the character of Christian giving here, he brings out

principles as to method. These two things are very closely related, and the method has already been brought out plainly. But we may say further that it is:

1. Systematic. If there were no directions for systematic giving in God's Word, ought we not, as reasonable creatures, of our own accord to introduce system in this important matter? We feel the benefit of system everywhere else—in our families, in our business, in our studies, in our church worship. Why should we not here? We have a great system for spending money, how foolish if we have no system for bringing it in! We shall be like a great city with an elaborate arrangement of water pipes and reservoirs, without the water. That water comes not from the pipes and reservoirs, not from the natural or artificial lakes from which it is drawn, nor from the brooks and rivers that flow into these, but from the tiny springs that gush constantly from the feet of trees, and from under mossy rocks in hidden places in the woods, where man's eye seldom or never sees them. They never cease flowing because they come from the depths beneath and the heights above. But they would never reach the parched lips of the city worker and sufferer without a system. So this system of apostolic giving aims to bring

the spring of faith and love in every believer's soul—fed from deep experiences on earth, rained down into the soul from heaven—into contact with those who are perising for the water of life.

2. Periodical and frequent giving is indicated here. A great financier said, in reply to a question as to how the means were to be raised for the work of the Church in her war with sin, "The first thing to be secured," said he, emphatically, "is periodicity." This forms habit, and habit becomes second nature, or if it is a gracious habit, we might say second grace. It makes the giving easy and pleasant. Frequent giving is good for the giver and good for the cause of Christ. Objection is sometimes made that there are such frequent calls to give. But if these calls are divine calls, we should be glad to hear them, and if we are laying aside frequently, we shall always have something to give, and shall do it cheerfully. By this method the poor are able to give more readily and to a far larger amount.

Frequent giving which regularly reached its object would greatly help our benevolent work. More than one-half of what is given to our Boards is received by them during the last three months of the year. They are like those countries which have a wet season and a dry.

Through a large part of the year they are parched. How much more pleasant is the land refreshed by frequent rains!

3. Giving should be *proportionate*—"as the Lord hath prospered him." Dr. Hodge says, "literally, 'whatever has gone well with him.'" Every man is to give as he has received. Our Lord states the principle broadly, "Freely ye have received, freely give." If we look at the subject in this light, if we consider God's gifts to us in providence and grace, any arithmetical proportion seems insignificant and absurd. What proportion of your means would you give for your life if it was in danger? What proportion for your wife and family? What proportion for salvation? What for eternal life? Yet these are the thoughts which the apostle brings into view when urging this subject in his second epistle. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But because we can give no adequate proportion to what we have received, shall we therefore do nothing? Surely that is worse than to give a little. Let us rather make the proportion of our gifts as large as possible.

The Word of God, reason, and experience indicate that it is wise to have a fixed proportion in giving. What we give must bear a pro-

portion to our income and expenditures—is it not wise and right to determine beforehand what proportion that shall be? Then we shall know what we can spend and what we can give. That the tithe is to be the measure for those who live under the gospel, I do not believe. The single tithe is nowhere ordained as a measure in the Scriptures, the Jews gave two tithes every year, and with all their offerings, a third, or some have estimated, a half, of their income. The same measure for all is unfair to the poor; the laboring man tithes really his principal in this method, the capitalist his income. Some business men have no profits, and therefore no incomes, in some years; the system does not affect extravagance in living after the tenth is paid; it interferes with the liberty of the gospel—a liberty to love more, to work more, and to give more than under the law.

The teaching of Christ is that we must give whether we have income or not. He calls alms "righteousness." "Sell that ye have and give alms." He represents us as stewards, and the question for us to determine is not, How much ought I to give? but, How much may I keep? Such was the feeling of that noble man, James Lenox, to whom this seminary is so much indebted. When he came into his father's

property he determined to give away nine-tenths of his income of $100,000 and keep one-tenth for himself. He afterward increased the proportion as his property increased; and, we are informed on good authority, gave away for forty years $200,000 per year.

But though the tithe measure may not be the gospel standard, there is some reason for the prominence given to tithing in the Scriptures. We are taught by it to set apart for God systematically, and before we use for ourselves, a certain stated portion of our property. This is implied in what the apostle says here. If we think of the tithe at all, therefore, let it be simply the starting-point in our giving.

If there were time, we could give abundant testimony of the benefits of proportionate giving. Spurgeon says of himself: "I knew a lad in Christ once who adopted the principle of giving a tenth to God. When he won a money prize for an essay on a religions subject, he felt that he could not give less than one-fifth of it. He has never since been able to deny himself the pleasure of having a fifth to give. God has wonderfully blessed that lad, and increased his means, and his enjoyment of that luxury of luxuries—the luxury of doing good."

If time permitted, we could readily show that

blessings temporal and blessings spiritual, benefits to the giver and benefits to the cause of Christ, have resulted from the principles here indicated.

Young men, I commend them to the consideration and practice of every one of you. I know you are not unmindful of the benevolent work of the Church, and the standard which you reach in your gifts is higher than that of the Church at large. But in looking over a report read when I was secretary of the Religious Contribution Society, in 1864, I find that the amount given was $652, nearly $200 more than was given last year. I have no doubt that the universal practice of systematic and proportionate giving would largely increase your gifts.

What we all need, that we may perform aright this and every other work for God and our fellow-men, is more of the Spirit of God. When the spring is full it must run over, and it is wonderful how much water one spring will give. I saw one, on the hottest day last summer, from which a pailful could hardly be dipped at once, supply the wants of a thirsty Sabbath-school party of a hundred or so. Streams of living water shall flow from him who has the Spirit. "As he abounds in faith and utterance and knowledge and all diligence. . . . he will abound in this grace also."

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.

"One thing is needful." Luke x. 42.

THE age in which we live has special need for the teaching of this passage. It is a time of intense activity in every department of human life. Never before was commerce so large, for never before were its channels so broad and smooth. Never were there such manufactures, for never before was there such machinery and motive power. The inventions, the discoveries, the educational advantages, the books, the newspapers, the art products, show how busy men are in the sphere of mind. The churches, the Sabbath-schools, the societies for charity and reform, prove the claims for moral and religious work. It seems impossible not to be "careful and troubled about many things" if we try to perform the duties which naturally arise, and rightly use the talents and opportunities which the Master gives. Yet the truth announced by Christ was meant for every age, and we shall be helped by trying to apply it to ourselves.

It would be absurd to infer from it that we ought to regret the many calls upon our time

and labor which have come through man's improvement. We need not wish to become savage again, to be contented with one garment, one room, one blanket, one dish, one occupation. Savages have plenty of time on their hands, but how do they spend it? They have but few wants, but what are they? They have simplified their lives by making simple their natures. They are animals, not men. Do those who sigh that former times were better than these want to go back to this? Nor should the truth taught here lead us to a false economy, to which there may be a temptation in these times. "Farmers do not live as they used to," is a remark which we often hear. No, and I, for one, am glad of it. I rejoice at everything which tends to improve men, and I am sure that increasing the comforts, and especially the opportunies for mental development, has this tendency. There has been much extravagance. Men have no right to go into debt for things which are not necessary, especially when they do not see clearly how the debt is to be paid. But let us beware of that false economy which defeats itself. The workman would be foolish to live so meagrely as to unfit him for labor. Any man is foolish to deprive himself and his family of advantages for

intellectual and spiritual improvement, if he can by any means afford them.

We must be careful to distinguish, however, between what is necessary and important, and what we are better without. There has been as much extravagance in the wrong use of money as in using too much. The principle laid down in the text will guide us here. Most commentators take the view that our Lord, in speaking of the "one thing," intended to contrast it with the "many" things that Martha was anxious to prepare for His entertainment, as if He meant *one dish* is sufficient. However this may be, there is no doubt that He who "had not where to lay His head," in order that human homes might be happier, would have gladly gone without food for the body altogether, if He might bring the "one thing needful" to the soul. He often did this; as when, at the well of Samaria, He said to His disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" when He taught the thousands through the day, and, when it was over, inquired for food for them, and not for Himself; when He fasted for forty days, that He might attend to what was more needful than bodily wants.

There is, on the whole, little danger of our neglecting the good things which our day

brings to us. There is much more fear that, in its many cares and comforts, we should forget the "one thing needful."

Let us inquire: I. What is the "one thing needful"? II. How may we get it? III. What are the hindrances to our securing it?

I. What is meant by the "one thing needful"?

I remark, in the first place: it is that which is necessary to the existence of anything, without which it would not be, or would not be what it is. Matter is needful for a tree. It could not exist without it. Life is necessary as well. It might have the proper form, but it could not do the work of a tree, produce leaves and wood and fruit, without life. But life in the tree has certain peculiarities which give character to the tree. Why is it a tree, and not the lowly violet? Why a tree, and not an animal? Why a pear-tree, and not a peach? There must be something in it to cause these differences. If we could find it, we should have the one thing needful for that particular tree. What makes man what he is? It is not life, nor reason; for animals have these in a lower degree. There is something which he has that they do not possess. He has a conscience, a moral nature, he knows right from wrong.

Some argue that animals are not devoid of moral qualities. We know what a vicious horse is, and he sometimes seems to know it himself. But man has a spiritual nature which has never been claimed for the animals. They never have any intelligent, conscious thought of God. He is the One Thing Needful to the universe, who "spake and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast," without whom there could be no order, no beauty, no power, no matter, no mind, no life. "In Him we live and move and have our being." To deny God is to murder the universe, to commit intellectual and moral and spiritual suicide. The man, therefore, who has not God ceases to be a man. To be godly is to be manly.

The one thing needful for anything is that which will meet its needs. The plant needs air and light and rain. The animal needs food and drink and exercise. If there is any one thing which will supply these wants, it is the needful thing for the plant and the animal. The wants of the lower orders of creation are met in man. His kind but firm rule subdues its rough and rugged forces. He makes the desert to blossom as the rose. By his hand the earth clothes herself with the varied garments of the grains, instead of the plain robes of forest and of grass.

Fruit trees so improve under his culture that the crab-apple becomes the large, luscious pippin. Flowers in new forms, with new beauties, repay his tender care. Animals so develop under his direction that it is hard to believe they belong to the same stock with those who have not received attention. To the creatures below him man is, by divine appointment and constitution, something like a god. There is One, and only One, who can do for him what man does for them. He can make the barren heart fruitful, He can clothe the soul with new beauties, so that we shall see such contrasts as there were between the Bechuanas of Africa and the Moffat who elevated them. He can cause new graces to flower out with wonderful beauty and perfume in the life. He can renew the whole man in the image of His Son, so that he can hardly be recognized as belonging to the ruined race of Adam.

All man's needs are met in God. His inquiring mind finds in Him the best answer to the many problems in the universe and in his own destiny, which have vexed philosophers in all ages. How did all these things come into being? Why is there so much beauty and order in them? Where is man from, and what is he, and where is he going? An aged Saxon said,

when the question of receiving the first missionaries into England was under discussion: "As we were talking, I saw a little bird fly into the room. It stayed awhile and then flew out again. I am that bird; I came out of darkness, I am going into the dark again." There is One who has said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Man is a social being. He needs some one to love, some one with whom he can hold fellowship. He has his friends, but they cannot be always with him; death or distance may divide him from them. They cannot always help him, or enter fully into his feelings, or understand him. There is One who can; and the soul may say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." Man is a moral being. He feels that he is accountable for his acts. To whom? To his friends? They cannot judge of the motives which make the actions good or bad. To himself? His conscience may be like Paul's, commending him for what is wrong. His sense of right and wrong calls for a God to guide it, and a God to judge it. Man is a religious being. He must worship something. His hunger for a God has caused some pitiful scenes in his history, as pitiful as those seen in China, when famished men and women have eaten human

flesh, or filled their gnawing, gaping stomachs with clay for lack of food. So have men cried out to stocks and stones, to reptiles and low plants, to men worse than themselves, to the earth on which they tread, or the universe, which cannot hear or care for their prayer, "Come, be our God."

But these natural needs of man do not express the whole of his wants. He is fallen from his first estate, he is less than man now, and this fact increases the need for God a hundredfold. If a well man needs a friend, a guide, a protector, a teacher, how much more a sick one! Man is a sinner, and the one thing needful to him is a sin-bearer. He is lost and must have a Saviour. He is miserable and must have a Comforter. Talk not to the patient burning with fever of the pure, cold water of the well which he cannot reach. This does not meet his need. But hold to his lips the glass which has been drawn from it, and his look of gratitude will call down silent blessings on your head. We would not tell you, thirsty soul, of the pure river of water of life flowing abundantly from the throne of God, but we tell you that Jesus holds it to your lips, and says, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

We have come, then, to this: that the "one

thing needful" is Christ Himself. Revelation teaches us that he is not merely needful to man as fallen, but that he is essential to the universe. "All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

But there is another text which may be applied to learn the one thing needful. We see that all things about us have their use, and that which enables them to perform their special part may be regarded as the one thing needful. What does man need to make him most useful to the world? Have not the men of high moral and spiritual aims accomplished most for the good of their fellows? Some of them have been men of no great natural gifts and of little education. The Apostles were not above men of their class. But the effect depends, not on the instrument, but on the motive power; not on the tool, but the hand. A candle, though soft, can be sent through a board, if there is powder enough behind it. Arthur, in his *Tongue of Fire*, has well illustrated this: "Suppose we saw an army sitting down before a granite fort, and they told us that they intended to batter it down; we might ask them, 'How?' They point to a cannon-ball. Well, but there is no power in that; it is heavy, but not more than half a hun-

dred, or perhaps a hundred, weight; if all the men in the army hurled it against the fort, they would make no impression. They say, 'No; but look at the cannon.' Well, there is no power in that. A child may ride upon it, a bird may perch in its mouth; it is a machine, nothing more. 'But look at the powder.' Well, there is no power in that. A child may spill it, a sparrow may peck it. Yet this powerless powder, and powerless ball, are put in the powerless cannon; one spark of fire enters it, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, that powder is a flash of lightning, and that ball a thunderbolt, which smites as if it had been sent from heaven." The one thing needful to make weak men useful in all the walks of life is the Spirit of Christ.

We mention only one other proof of the "one thing needful." It is that which will answer to the needs of man at all times. Some things which seem essential to happiness and power, and almost to our separate existence, may fail us. Reason may be overthrown or may be dimmed with age. Friends may be with us but a little while. Life itself will not continue long. We need something that will last through life, help us in every duty, sustain us in every trial, go with us to lighten the dark valley, keep us

from sinking as we cross the river, and stand by our side at the bar of God. This can be found. It is that good part which Mary had, which Christ says "shall never be taken away from her." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

I cannot close this part of the subject and introduce the next topic better than by calling to your mind similar expressions about the "one thing" in Scripture. "One thing have I desired of the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 4); "Yet lackest thou one thing" (Luke xviii. 22); "This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 13.)

II. How may we secure this one thing needful? If it is absolutely necessary, we should be very anxious to secure it, our souls should thirst for it, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," like David's of old. If we have it, it matters not what we lack; if we are without it, nothing else is of any account. As has been said:

> "Give but thyself;
> Without Thee, I am poor,
> And with Thee rich,
> Take what Thou wilt away."

In this passage we have directions as to the way in which this most needed thing may be acquired.

1. It is a *matter of choice.* "Mary hath chosen that good part." With her it seemed to be a natural choice—one to which her gentle and dependent nature led. Some souls are drawn to Christ without a struggle. It is not because they are better than others, but because they feel their sin and weakness more than others. They hear John say, "Behold the Lamb of God," and they follow Jesus without being conscious that the impulse comes from above. They say: "Draw us, and we will run after Thee." They are of those of whom it is prophesied: "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me." Others have a desperate struggle before they will submit, like the strong fish taken with the hook rather than drawn in with the net. They must be smitten to the ground, as it were, with the heavenly light, like proud, Pharisaic Saul. The main thing in both is the choice of Christ, the one thing needful. Do not wait, then, for feeling. To choose your own way of coming to Christ is to refuse Christ and His way. He is the Way, as well as the Truth and the Life. If you have only the conviction that you need a Saviour, and that Christ is able and

willing to save you, that is enough to lead to the choice. The joy and the peace and the power will follow if the *choice is a right one.*

Which leads to:

2. It must be a *single-minded and full-hearted choice.* Christ must be prominent in the mind and heart. It must bring us to His feet, where it brought Mary. She forgot everything else, as that other Mary did who clasped His feet after the Resurrection. He was to each "Rabboni" ("My Master"). It was not selfish that she did not help Martha. She forgot her work, her care, her sister, herself. She saw only her Lord. She had that one thing of which the Psalmist speaks: The desire to dwell in God's house (Ps. xxvii. 4). She had that one thing which the young man lacked, and which Christ recommended to him. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast." Her richest possessions she brought to those blessed feet afterward, when she broke the alabaster-box of precious ointment over them. This is the kind of choice Christ must have from all who come to Him. "Mr. Wells," said a young lady to Ralph Wells; "is it wrong to dance? If I may dance, I will become a Christian." "However it may be with others, it is wrong for you," said Mr. Wells; "Christ takes no 'ifs.'" There were none be-

tween Mary and her Master. Hers was the choice of love—of need—of the plant for its food, of the animal for the air, of the bride for the bridegroom, who is ready to promise that, leaving father and mother and all else, she is willing to choose this man, and cleave to him only. We may well unite in the wish so beautifully expressed in Charles Wesley's hymn—

> "Oh, that I could forever sit
> With Mary at the Saviour's feet;
> Be this my happy choice:
> My only care, delight, and bliss,
> My joy, my heaven on earth, be this,
> To hear the Bridegroom's voice."

3. Mary's choice was an *intellectual* or *intelligent* and not merely a sentimental one. She sat at Jesus' feet and *heard His word.* She loved the truth. She was getting it from the fountain-head, clear and strong. There is enough here to fill the largest and profoundest mind, for here is One that is "filled with all the fullness of God." A Paul and a John were willing to fall at these feet, as well as a Mary. What a privilege was hers! to hear such words as have, by their reading merely, stirred thousands of noble minds and hearts to noble deeds, pronounced by the living tongue of the living, loving God-Man. We know the difference be-

tween the written and the spoken word in ordinary cases. How much the thoughts of Christ must have gained from His tones, His expression of face, His gestures! Yet we have a privilege she did not possess, the privilege of listening in our hearts to the voice of that divine Teacher—that Comforter—who was promised to teach all things, and bring all things to remembrance. It is more to sit at the feet of the exalted and glorified, the crucified and risen Lord, than to sit at the feet of Christ in the flesh. But to enjoy what she enjoyed, we must not merely take up her position, but have her submissive, humble, and truth-loving spirit.

III. But there are hindrances in this busy life of ours to the securing and enjoying this "one thing needful." These are shown in Martha's case. She was a servant of the Lord. She was serving Him then, no doubt, but, like many another servant of His, she had not learned the true spirit of service. The difficulty arose partly from her natural constitution. She is the very picture of a busy housewife—pushing, energetic, practical, and hospitable too; able to extend a worthy hospitality because of the strong and vigorous qualities which provided for the house and ruled it. Such qualities are admirable, and necessary when properly controlled. Directed

by the reproof of Christ, here, perhaps, we see them shine out finely when the Lord comes to the grave of Lazarus. It was the strong practical faith of Martha that said, "I know that, even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." There she makes a noble confession of Christ.

But the faults of her natural disposition come out here, and they are the faults of many earnest workers for Christ.

1. She gave too much thought and care to unimportant things. "She was cumbered about much serving," "careful and troubled about many things." As has been said (Lange): "The heart of Martha is often as a sea, which the storms have too greatly agitated for it to be able clearly to reflect the image of the sun; while with Mary the light of heaven shines upon a still, clear, watery mirror." The difficulty lay not in her activity, but in her agitation; not in her being busy, but in her being cumbered and careful and troubled. The ocean is not still even when there is no storm; the motion of the waves and tides and currents keeps it from stagnation. The fiercest winds only agitate its surface, they are not felt in its deep and quiet heart. So a man or woman may have a very busy life, but a very quiet mind. Some of the

busiest men are never disturbed and never in a hurry. They have learned to maintain their self-control and self-possession under all temptations. They are able to have communion with God and rest in Christ amid the absorbing occupations of life. John Wesley says, in a letter to a friend: "When I was at Oxford and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved: I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience: I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life, but it was no hindrance to silence of spirit."

Mr. Boehm was chaplain to Prince George of Denmark, secretary to him and Queen Anne, principal manager of almost all the public charities in the kingdom, and employed in numberless private charities. An intimate friend, knowing this, said to him, when they were alone: "Sir, are you not hurt by that amazing hurry of business? I have seen you in your office, surrounded with people, listening to one, dictating to another, and at the same time writing to a third; could you then retain a sense of the presence of God?" He answered: "All that company and all that business no more hindered

or lessened my communion with God than if I had been all alone in a church kneeling before the communion table."

The difficulty with Martha was, not that she did too much work, but that she was not doing it in a proper spirit. She put the service of the Master before the Master Himself. "What!" says Stier, "was the Lord to be left sitting by Himself, waiting for their cookery and dishes, as ill-mannered people leave their guest, as if he had come only for the sake of eating?" Let us beware lest, in the many Christian activities of our day, we lose sight too often of Him for whom they are done and through whom alone they can be effective. It was perhaps to guard against this mistake that Luke records this incident, out of place after the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

2. We shall see how wrong her spirit was when we reflect further that her over-anxiety made her fretful and fault-finding. Love is the "one thing needful" to bring the soul into harmony with Christ, and whatever prevents that is a hindrance to our finding Him. Paul says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing;" Stier says: "Martha cannot call away her sister quietly,

for Christ was speaking to her; therefore she has to interrupt Jesus in order to set Mary at liberty; she does it boldly, and says it to His face, as if it was a culpable waste of time to listen to Him; nay, she even corrects the Lord's want of the proper care, and dictates to Him what He ought to say." This is the spirit which Paul rebuked in the Corinthian church saying: "For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" The Christian, who from temperament and circumstances seems called to active, outward work, must beware how he reproaches his fellow saint, who does certainly as necessary a work in the study. One must not say, "You are idle," nor the other, "You are superficial and worldly." There is call for both characters in the Church of Christ—call for the Peters as well as the Johns; for the Marthas as well as the Marys, "In its degeneracy," says Lange, "the Martha character becomes a proud work-holiness; the Mary nature, on the other hand, slothful quietism . . . The more intimately the zealous Martha's hand is united with the composed, quiet Mary's heart, so much the nearer does one come to the ideal of a harmonious Christian life." There is need for the June day as well as the October—and in order that there may be an October.

3. Martha exhibited a selfish spirit, which is contrary to that self-forgetfulness which loses itself in the "one thing needful." She did not think of the Lord's comfort, or of her sister's profit, but of her own troubles. "Dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help *me*." She thought as much, or more, of her honor as a housekeeper in her desire to provide well, as of the enjoyment of her divine guest. We have seen such hospitality where the rules of the house, and not the pleasure of those entertained, was the main thing.

We need the spiritual lesson, however, more than that in morals and manners. We need to watch lest we make our work for the Master so important as to feel that every one and everything must yield to it and to us.

In view of the whole subject, we remark:

1. How simple a matter is salvation! "There is only one thing needful," and that is Christ. This makes all the difference between heaven and hell.

2. How worthless are most of our lives! We can easily see who made the best choice here. Yet, like Martha, we are constantly choosing our housekeeping, our business, ourselves, not for our Lord, but instead of Him. What a com-

mentary on the degradation of man's nature, that he frequently calls that the "one thing needful" which the Word of God says is the "root of all evil." It is an ill-disguised sarcasm on the lowness of his aims and occupations. May the Spirit of God help us all to rise above this carnal nature, and choose that "good part which shall never be taken away from us."

THE PROMISES.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." 2 Peter i. 4.

PROMISES play a very important part in the intercourse of man with man. We are all familiar with the word, and understand practically what promises are, but we do not often realize how far the comfort and convenience, and even the very existence of society, depend upon them.

The most important relation of human life—the marriage relation — rests upon the promise of the wife to the husband, and the husband to the wife. The church and the state may doubly guard this relation by clear and strong laws, and the most solemn ceremonies; they may rightly throw around it the barrier of their severest penalties, but this will avail nothing if the parties do not feel the force of their mutual promises and endeavor to fulfill them.

The relation between masters and servants, between those who pay wages and those who earn them, also derives its value from the promise of work on one hand, and wages on the other.

The relation between you as a church and myself as pastor depends upon the mutual promises made at my installation over you. I promised "that, by the assistance of the grace of God, I would endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and would be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ, agreeably to my ordination engagements." You, in your turn, promised "to receive the word of truth from my mouth in meekness and love, and to submit to me in the exercise of discipline." You promised "to encourage me in my arduous labor, and to assist my endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification." I quote these words from the form prescribed in the confession of faith for installation services. The relation between pastor and people, then, rests on promises.

Our financial system has the same basis. It is often called a credit system, as distinguished from a system of direct exchanges. In earlier times and uncivilized countries, the latter method of doing business prevailed. The farmer exchanged his oats or corn for the clothes which he needed, or for articles which he did not himself produce. Now he receives from the one to whom he carries them a note or check,

or a certain amount of the currency of the country, all which are simply promises to pay.

From these illustrations we can see what an important part promises have to play in human society. Without them, many of our most valued relations would lose their stability; the husband would have no claim upon the wife, or the wife on the husband; the master on the servant, or the servant on the master; the pastor might, at any time, forsake his people, and the people their pastor; the merchant would be obliged to require an immediate return for that which he sold up to its full value.

Having seen the importance of promises, we may define a little more closely what a promise is. "It is a declaration, verbal or in writing, which binds the person who makes it to do or forbear something, and which gives the person to whom it is made a claim for doing, or forbearance of the thing specified." We see, then, that a promise has several elements or parts, and its value may be affected by any one of these. That value depends partly on the thing promised. A ten-dollar note is worth more than a one-dollar, because the Government or the bank promises to give ten times as much for it. The promise of the wife to the husband

is of more value than that of the servant to the master, because it includes so much more.

But the worth of a promise depends also on the condition attached. Sometimes a promise is absolute. The promise which Pharaoh made to Joseph when he had told him his dream—that he should be over his house, and that, according to his word, all his people should be ruled, and that only in the throne would he be greater—was an absolute promise. But generally there is a condition attached, and the worth of the promise is affected by the difficulty or ease with which the condition can be performed. The promise of Samson to give thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments to the Philistines, if they would guess his riddle, was not worth much to them, because it was impossible for them to fulfill the condition, since no one knew but himself about the finding honey in the carcass of the lion which he had slain. But, through the treachery of his wife, that which was difficult was made easy, and the promise became more valuable.

Again, the value of a promise depends much on the person who makes it. Has he the ability and the disposition to perform what he promises? If either of these is wanting, a very important element of the promise is lacking. The

worth of the promise may also be affected by the manner in which it is made. If it is made carelessly and thoughtlessly, we will not rely upon it as we would if it were made carefully and formally. It is of more value when written and signed with the name of the one who makes it than it is when merely verbal.

Two of these four elements which influence the value of a promise are of much more importance than the other two, for their absence would destroy the worth of any promise. If the person who promises has not the disposition or ability to fulfill the promise, or if the condition is not complied with on the part of the person to whom the promise is made, it matters little what may be the value of the things promised, or in what manner the promise may be given.

In God's relations with us, as well as in our relations with each other, we meet with promises. Our relation to God, however, does not begin with or rest upon a promise, as do some of our relations to one another, concerning which we have spoken. The relation of a child to its parent is not founded upon any promise of love or obedience, but has its origin in nature, and carries with it certain duties which the child is bound to perform, whether it ever has promised to do so or not. So our obligation to

love and serve God, our heavenly Father, does not depend upon any promise that we have made, upon any willingness or unwillingness on our part; we are bound to love and serve Him because He is God—our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer—independently of any promise made either privately, in secret communion with God, or publicly before His Church and the world.

From this we may learn what we should think of the strictures which so many who are outside of the Church are accustomed to make on the conduct of those within, often criticising them most harshly because they do not live up to their professions. While a stronger obligation to love and serve God does rest on those within the Church, on account of their solemn professions and promises, yet, as we have shown that the duty to love and serve God does not rest on a promise, but lies upon all, those who do not recognize their own duty in this respect are certainly more to be condemned than those who have admitted it solemnly and publicly, and are endeavoring in some measure to perform it, even though they often fall short.

But though God was not bound to give any special promise of reward to man on condition that he fulfilled his duty, there is reason to believe that such a promise was implied, if it was

not actually expressed, in the Divine Commands to our first parents in Eden. If they were to die on eating the forbidden fruit, the inference was easy that they should live so long as they abstained from it.

But however this may be, we know that God, in His dealings with sinful man, in His endeavors to restore our ruined race, has made abundant use of promises. These have the same essential elements as promises among men, and their value is to be measured in the same way. The apostle Peter in our text calls them "exceeding great and precious promises," and if we meditate upon them we shall find that they are most valuable in each of their parts, that they are precious from whatever point we view them.

We have already found that a promise includes within itself these four elements: 1. The thing promised. 2. The person promising. 3. The manner in which the promise is made. 4. The condition on which its fulfillment depends. We also found that the most important of these were the person promising and the condition.

Now we shall see that in each and all of these parts the promises which God has given are "exceeding great and precious promises."

I. They are so if we consider, in the first place, that which is promised. This is not one thing,

but many. They relate not to things which are unnecessary to us, but to those which we greatly need. Their value cannot be measured by our needs, but goes far beyond them.

God's promises are many. The Bible is studded with them, as the heavens are with stars on a clear night. Like the stars, they do not diffuse merely a general radiance, but when examined in detail each is found to possess certain characteristics of its own. There are promises for our bodies: "Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed, for after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." There are promises for the mind: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." There are promises for our hearts and souls: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." There are promises suited to the different periods of life: "Even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you;" "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord

thy God giveth thee." There are promises adapted to our social nature and relations: "The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call;" "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee;" "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me."

There are promises, also, for all the different circumstances of life; for trouble: "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Promises for times of joy: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you;" promises for sickness: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble . . . . thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" promises for famine and war: "In famine He shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword."

There are promises for every spiritual condi-

tion; for him who is yet in his sins: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon;" for the penitent: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out;" for the perfect sanctification of the believer: "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" for the doubting soul: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory;" for the backslider: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts;" for the believing soul: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Consider, too, all the promises concerning the coming and work of Christ, given to one age after another, growing brighter as time rolled on, from that first one in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, down to the last in Revelation, "Surely I come quickly." Think, too, of the promises concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit—the sending of the Comforter; of those connected with the proper use of the means of grace, especially with prayer; of those relating to the trying hour of death, to the resurrection of the body, and to

the eternal enjoyment of believers, as, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that *where* I am *there* ye may be also."

Finally, recall those all-comprehensive promises such as, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death ; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Thus I have endeavored to bring up before your mind a few of the promises of God's Word, and, by throwing them into classes, to give you some idea of their number and variety. The classes might be greatly multiplied, and a multitude of promises found for each new class. On account of their number and variety, they admit of almost an infinite number of applications, so that a case can hardly be imagined for which some promise might not be found. Every man who ever lived upon the earth, in every

event of his life might have discovered here some promise specially suited to his need.

In this suitableness of the things promised to man's need, we have the chief element of their value. Number and variety alone will not give worth to a thing. Countless grains of sand would be very little prized as a gift—a promise of such would be thought of little account. Even things inherently valuable may be made comparatively worthless to one who has more need of something else. What would millions of gold or precious stones be worth to a starving, thirsting, sick, or dying man? But the things which God has promised are just what man needs; bread to the hungry; wisdom to the ignorant; a new heart for a stony heart; support to the aged; long life to the young; society for the lonely; comfort in trouble; continuation of happiness; nursing in sickness; forgiveness for the penitent sinner; tenderness for the weak and doubting; a welcome to the returning backsliders; a Saviour who has borne our sins and will present us faultless before the throne at last; the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify the heart which cannot change itself; life to the dying; a new and glorious body in the place of that dissolving corruption; a perfect abode, answering every need of our souls

which has been met or has not been met in this world. Surely promises which assure us of such blessings may well be called "exceedingly great and precious."

But man's needs are more than met in the things which God has promised; just as the needs of his body are more than satisfied by what God has provided in the world. Many fruits wither on the trees, or rot on the ground beneath, because man does not need to pluck them; many springs are never tasted by him; many things delight his senses, which he could easily dispense with. The flowers with their bright and varied hues and sweet fragrance; the landscape arrayed in various colors, and showing a pleasing variety of field and forest, hill and dale—certainly add to man's pleasure, but they are not necessary to his existence and he has a hundred other sources of happiness.

So it is with the blessings promised in God's Word. They more than restore man to the place from which he fell; they bring him to a better paradise than Eden; they give him a better body than Adam had, for that could die; a better soul, for his could sin and fall; a safer abode, which no tempter shall ever enter; better companions, the constant presence of God, angels, and redeemed spirits; a nearness to God

through Christ, of which he did not conceive. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Those things which God has promised are then valuable in themselves, valuable because they answer to our needs, and their value is increased in proportion to their number and variety.

II. But, in the second place, the value of a promise depends on the character of the person who makes it, on his ability and willingness to fulfill it.

There is but one person in the universe who could make such promises as those made in the Bible. Who but God would dare to make promises which none but God could fulfill? Any man, any creature, who would do so would be mad; but no being of disordered mind could conceive and express such promises.

Every attribute of the Divine nature gives us assurance that these promises will be fulfilled. We saw in the beginning that the ability and disposition of the person promising was one of the most important elements in a promise. There is no doubt of either on the part of God. A man may desire greatly to fulfill his promise

and not be able to do so. This may not be his fault; he cannot foresee or command the future, and before the time arrives for the fulfillment of his promise, some change may have taken place in his circumstances — he himself even may no longer be in the land of the living.

Others, while they have the ability, are false to their word and wickedly refuse to carry out what they have promised.

God's infinite power renders His promises sure, for with Him "All things are possible." He can renew and sanctify the soul, raise the dead, and perform all other things which He has spoken.

His infinite wisdom makes this still more certain. Ignorant and short-sighted man, unable to foresee the future, may be disappointed in his plans and hopes; but God is never defeated or disappointed. His plans have been so arranged that not one thing will fail of all the good things that He hath spoken. Men would have said as they looked upon Christ stretched upon the cross — a suffering and apparently helpless victim — that the promises which God had given, of deliverance and salvation through Him, could never be fulfilled. But in His infinite wisdom, the death of His Son was the most essential thing to the fulfillment of the promise.

God's truthfulness makes the fulfillment of His promises still more sure. "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the Son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

The justice of God adds another ground of assurance. The blessings promised are not given to us for our own sakes, but have been purchased by Christ, and He claims the reward of His sufferings, saying in His prayer for His disciples, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." In another view, the blessings promised are a reward to the righteous, conditioned upon their faith and obedience; hence they can claim the fulfillment of the promise when the condition is performed, as it is said in the Hebrews, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to His saints, and do minister."

The mercy and love of God make it still more certain that He will bestow the gifts promised. There is no danger that He will be less willing to bless in the future than He has been in the past. We have not to wait till

some distant day to come for the realization of the promises. We see them fulfilled before our eyes; we experience their performance in our own hearts. Souls are renewed and minds enlightened; the penitent is welcomed and the doubting confirmed; the troubled are comforted, and sinners forgiven in the very midst of us. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

God's unchangeableness, which underlies all His attributes, gives still further certainty to His promise. His Power, Wisdom, Justice, Truth, and Love remain the same. According to these the promises were given, and according to them they will be fulfilled.

We see, then, when we turn from the things promised to the One who makes the promises, these appear to be "exceeding great and precious."

III. We have seen that the value of a promise depends somewhat upon the manner in which it is given. A careless, informal, or hasty promise will not be considered as having much importance, but it will be different if the promise is carefully written out, signed, witnessed, and sealed.

The Divine promises possess this element of value to a high degree. They are clearly and

fully recorded in this Book. They bear in themselves the impress of the hand of God—His signature, as it were. Men at various periods, at long intervals of the world's history, have testified to the fact that they came from God. Hundreds and thousands of every nation and kindred and tongue stand ready to testify that many of them have been fulfilled. Mighty works accompanied the wonderful words when they were delivered to prove their Divine origin. When God made promises to Abraham, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the animals which he had divided. The burning bush attested the Divine presence, when the promise was made to Moses that his countrymen should be delivered from Egypt. Thunders and lightnings proved God present at Sinai; and many wonderful works done by Christ showed that He spake with authority in the many precious promises which He made; and those promises were finally sealed by His blood. The apostle, referring in the Hebrews to the solemnity with which the promises of God were made, says: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was

impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

The promises of God are given repeatedly as well as clearly and solemnly. Often we find them in the same words. How often in the Psalms, for instance, does God promise to be a "refuge" to His people! Very frequently we find the same idea in different words. Thus Christ promises that those who eat His flesh shall never hunger, and he that drinketh of the water that He shall give him shall never thirst: meaning to promise the same spiritual blessings under these different figures. Thus, as the mother by repeated assertions endeavors to calm the needless fears of her child, does God by His many promises endeavor to confirm our faith and establish our hope, to fill us with peace and joy.

When we consider, then, the manner in which these promises are given, they are exceeding great and precious.

IV. But there is one more element which must be considered before the value of a promise can be determined. If the conditions attached are such that they cannot be performed, the promise will be of no value whatever.

To some of the Divine promises no condi-

tions at all are appended. They are absolute, and will be fulfilled, whatever man may do to oppose them. Thus the promise for the conversion of the world is absolute, "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." So also is the promise to give the Spirit to renew the heart. Regeneration does not depend on faith and repentance. These are the results of it, not the causes, but any one who seeks it from God, sincerely desiring and endeavoring to repent and believe, will be regenerated. "I will put My spirit within you," God said by Ezekiel, "and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." Of the same kind are the promises to keep the saints from final ruin. These do not depend on the good behavior of those who are Christians, but they will not be fulfilled without this. God, however, by His Spirit, ensures their good conduct. Such a promise is, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me," "and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

But to most of the promises there are conditions attached. These are presented under

different forms. Sometimes faith is represented as the condition, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned;" sometimes repentance, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" sometimes upon some good work, "He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins;" sometimes upon prayer, "Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." But all these conditions may be resolved into one, and that is faith. If you will only believe that Christ died for sinners, and, feeling your sins, confess them to Him, and trust in Him alone for salvation, you may apply all these promises to yourself. If you will not do this, not one of these promises, great as is their number and variety, sure as is their performance on account of the character of the One who promises and the manner in which they are made—not one of them is for you. You have no right to appropriate them to yourself any more than you would have to take property which had been willed to another. You do not answer to the description given of the person to whom the money is left, to whom the promises are made. But the blessings promised are not beyond your reach. God has said

that He is willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; and if you ask for the Spirit to renew your soul, and yield yourselves to His influences, these "exceeding great and precious promises" may yet be yours. Surely you cannot call the condition hard when God is willing to help you to fulfill it.

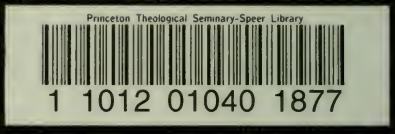
But if you have fulfilled the conditions, then these promises—"great and precious" in every element which could make them valuable—are yours. You have already begun to experience their fulfillment.

We may learn something in regard to the value of promises from what we see about us at this season. It is the season of promise. The grain lately sown begins to cover plowed fields with a delicate green; the trees and shrubs are covered with countless promises of leaves, unfolding day by day; and the fruit trees, in their delicate and beautiful and varied blossoms, give great promises of fruit. In their present beauty we enjoy a partial fulfillment of their promises, but look forward to a fuller enjoyment when the ripe fruit shall hang in clusters and give pleasure both to the eye and the palate.

"The great and precious promises" of God's Word, my brethren, are as numerous, as varied, as beautiful, as these blossoms of spring. They

do not deceive. The poor fruit has its flowers as well as the good, but none of these promises are poor. They speak to us clearly and plainly. They never disappoint. No frost, nor heat, nor rain shall hinder these blossoms from coming to maturity. We enjoy the blossoms now; we shall fully enjoy the fruit when we walk beneath the tree of life above. Let us remember, however, the condition attached, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Be not slothful," brethren, "but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

THE END.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